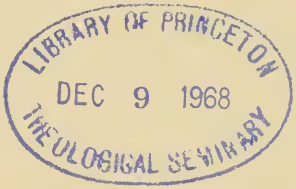

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THE

WORKS

OF

SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.,

FIRST PASTOR OF

THE CHURCH IN GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS.,

AFTERWARDS PASTOR OF

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NEWPORT, R. I

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

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CHAPTER XIII.

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SECTION VII.

The Doctrine of Election.

WHAT has been said in the fourth chapter, Vol. I., on the decrees of God, includes and establishes the doctrine of particular election; and this doctrine has been supposed, and in a measure brought into view, a number of times in the foregoing sections. But it is thought expedient, and of importance, that it should be more particularly considered, explained, and vindicated; and this will be most properly done in the chapter on the application of redemption, as this limits the application, and points out the subjects to whom it is effectually applied, and who, in the issue, receive the whole benefit of redemption.

The doctrine of election imports that God, in his eternal decree, by which he determined all his works, and fixed every thing and every event that shall take place to eternity, has chosen a certain number of mankind to be redeemed, fixing on every particular person whom he will save, and giving up the rest to final impenitence and endless destruction.

This doctrine may be explained, and the evidence of the truth of it produced, by attending to the following propositions: —

I. Mankind are entirely dependent on God, on his determination and sovereign mercy, for salvation. All creatures depend on God for all the good they have. Their existence, and all their enjoyments, are the fruit of his determination and appointment, which has made the difference between one and another, in every respect. But man is, in a peculiar sense

and degree, dependent on the sovereign will and pleasure of God for salvation. He is utterly *lost* in sin, not only infinitely guilty, and deserving to be destroyed forever, but wholly inclined to rebellion, and fixed in a disposition to oppose God in every method he can take to recover and save him, unless his heart be renewed by almighty power and grace; to which favor none have the least claim, or can have, but are infinitely unworthy of it. And when the way was open for the pardon and salvation of sinful man, by what the Mediator had done and suffered, consistent with the divine law and righteousness; yet none could be saved, unless they be renewed by the Spirit of God, and made willing in the day of his power. This, therefore, depends on the determination and purpose of God; and he has "mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." God being under no obligation to save any one of mankind, it must depend on his sovereign will whether any should be saved; and if any, whether all, or only a part of mankind: and if only some of them, how many, and the particular persons that should be subjects of this favor. This must be determined by God, for there is no other being that has a right to determine it, or that can do it; and it is impossible that God should not determine it. He is infinitely powerful and wise, he knew what was best to be done, and it wholly depended on him to determine and do that which is on the whole wisest and best. It belonged to him to decide and fix every thing respecting this matter, "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will."

II. It is infinitely best and most desirable, that this should be determined by God. He only is infinitely wise and good; therefore, whatever he determines shall be done and take place, is perfectly right, wisest, and best. It is, therefore, infinitely desirable that he should order every thing that takes place, and all events; but more especially those things that relate to the eternal existence and endless happiness or misery of man, whether any shall be saved or all lost; and if only a part of mankind be saved, how many, and what particular persons shall be included in this number. This is a matter of great importance, and not of indifference, whether this person shall be saved, rather than another, and it requires infinite wisdom to determine it right, so as to answer the best ends. Were any creature to determine it, in any one instance, especially apostate man, the event might be undesirable, and of infinitely evil consequence. Were man to decide it, independent of God, and were this possible, it would be most undesirable and infinitely dreadful to the wise and good; and they rejoice that this important affair, with all others, is in the hand of Him who is

infinitely wise and good; who has a right, and to whom it belongs to decide the state of every man, whether he shall be saved or not, and that he has done it by an unalterable decree.

III. It is certain from the Scripture, that God has determined not to save all mankind, but only a part, and a particular number of them. The Redeemer himself has declared this expressly, and it is abundantly asserted in the Old Testament and in the New. A number are to go away into everlasting punishment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is unquenchable: and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever, etc.* Had not God revealed this, it could not have been known what would be the event of redemption, whether all will be saved, or not. But God has made it known.

We are not told in the Scripture the precise number that shall be saved, nor what proportion of mankind will be of this number; but from what is revealed respecting this matter, it is reasonable to suppose, that many more will be saved than lost, perhaps some thousands to one.† But, be this as it may, we are certain that the number that shall be saved is fixed by infinite wisdom and goodness, and every one of these is known unto God, and their names are written in the book of life, before the foundation of the world. We are also certain, that it is not owing to the want of goodness in God, or the insufficiency of the atonement and merit of Christ, that all mankind are not saved, for the latter is as sufficient to save the whole human race as part of them, or one individual; and the only reason why all are not saved is, because it is inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness; that is, it is not for the greatest general good. Infinite goodness, in all cases, and forever, opposes and forbids that to take place which is not for the greatest general good, be that what it may; and approves and effects that which will answer the best ends, and produce the greatest good in all cases. We are as certain of this as we can be that there is an infinitely wise, good, and omnipotent Being. Therefore, since God has declared that he has determined not to save all mankind, we know that this is not consistent with his goodness; that is, that it is not wisest and best, or, which is the same, it is not for the greatest good of the whole that all should be saved. God does not delight in

* This has been particularly considered and proved, by a number of authors. See Dr. Edwards against Dr. Chauncy, and an Inquiry concerning the future state of those who die in their sins.

† See Dr. Bellamy, on the Millennium. And the fore-mentioned Inquiry, p. 135, etc.

the destruction of sinners, in itself considered, or for its own sake; and not one would be suffered to perish, if it were consistent with wisdom and goodness to save them all, or if this were consistent with the glory of God, or the greatest good of the universe. Nothing can be more certain, than that all will be saved that can be saved by Omnipotence, clothed with infinite wisdom and goodness; that is, that can be saved consistent with these. What is inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness, cannot be done by a Being infinitely wise and good, though omnipotent. It is *morally impossible;* for he cannot deny himself and act contrary to wisdom and goodness. Any man may be absolutely sure that he shall be saved, if it be not inconsistent with the goodness of God to save him, and in this sense impossible; or if it be consistent with the greatest glory of God, or the general good. And who, in his senses, that is, who that is wise and benevolent, would desire to be saved, or could ask for the salvation of any of his fellow-men, unless this might be consistent with the glory of God, and the greatest good of the universe?

As we know not what number of mankind can be saved, consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness, so we are utterly incapable of judging what particular persons can be saved, consistent with these. But God has determined this, without a possibility of any mistake. He knows what individuals of the human race can be saved, consistent with his glory and the greatest good of his eternal kingdom, and who cannot be saved consistent with this, and has determined and does act accordingly. In this he acts as a sovereign, as being under obligation to none, or not to one more than to another, but not arbitrarily, without any wisdom or reason. There is a good reason why one should be saved rather than another. There is a good reason why every one of those should be saved, who are, or shall be saved, and why every one of the rest should not be saved; from the different natural formation or capacity, or the different circumstances to us unknown and undescribable, which render it wisest and best, most for the glory of God, and the good of his kingdom, that the former should be saved, and the latter lost. This difference in circumstances, etc., originates in the divine decree, and is ordered by God according to the infinitely wise counsel of his own will; but it is as real a difference as if it had not this origin.

IV. We learn from the Holy Scriptures that a particular number of individuals are chosen from among mankind, on whom the divine love and sovereign grace are to be displayed in their salvation.

Reason teaches us that this must be so, as has been ob-

served; for it must be determined by God, and he makes the distinction between those who are saved and those who are lost, as it cannot be done by any one else; and if it were possible not to be determined by infinite wisdom and goodness, it would be infinitely disagreeable and dreadful to all the wise and good: and God determines all his works, all he will do, from eternity. Accordingly, the Scripture asserts this most expressly and abundantly in the following passages, and in many others which it will be needless to mention. The Redeemer often speaks of those who were given to him by the Father, to be redeemed and saved, as being a number selected from the rest of mankind, and says they shall come to him, and he will keep and save them; and his words strongly imply that they only shall be saved; and that there never was a design to save any but those who are thus selected and chosen, and given to him, to be saved by him. Therefore he declares that he does not pray for the salvation of any, except these elect ones who were given to him. He says, "All that the Father *giveth me* shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, *that of all which he hath given me*, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John vi. 37, 39.) "I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, *which gave them to me*, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 15, 16, 27–29.) "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life *to as many as thou hast given him.* I pray not for the world, *but for them which thou hast given me*, for they are thine; and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep through thine own name *those whom thou hast given me*, that they may be one as we are. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 1, 2, 9–11, 21.) Could the doctrine of election be expressed more fully and in a stronger manner by any words whatever? That a particular number of mankind, with every individual of that number, are chosen and selected from the rest, and in the covenant

of redemption given to Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him, and that these alone are to be saved. Agreeably to this, Christ repeatedly speaks of the *elect*, whose salvation is secured, and for whose sake he orders the great events in the world. "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the *elect's sake, whom he hath chosen*, he hath shortened the days. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, *if it were possible, even the very elect.* And then he shall send his angels, and shall gather together *his elect*, from the four winds." (Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27.)

The apostle Paul represents the salvation of the redeemed as originating in the eternal purpose of God, by which they are selected from others, and who, in consequence of this choice and appointment, are saved. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called, *according to his purpose.* For whom he did *foreknow*, (that is, whom he fixed upon, and chose to salvation,) he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's *elect:* it is God that justifieth." (Rom. viii. 28–30, 33.) "For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." (Rom. ix. 11, 15, 18.)

The doctrine of election, as stated above, is implied in these last words, and they are sufficient to prove it, were there nothing more said of it in the Bible; for if the will of God determines who shall be the subjects of divine mercy and be saved, and who shall not, as is here asserted, then God determined from eternity whom he would save, and whom he would not save, and fixed upon and chose a particular number of persons to be the subjects of his mercy in their salvation, exclusive of the rest of mankind; for what God wills to do, he does not begin to will to do it in time; but his determinations and will respecting all his works are without beginning. His will is unchangeable. "He is of one mind, and none can turn him."

This apostle brings the doctrine of election again into view,

and most expressly asserts it in the following words: "God hath not cast away his people which he *foreknew*.* Even so, then, at this present time also, there is a remnant, *according to the election of grace*. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; *but the election hath obtained it*, and the rest were blinded." (Rom. xi. 2, 5, 7.) And in his letter to the saints at Ephesus, he considers their election, or being chosen by God before the foundation of the world, that is, from eternity, by his eternal purpose and decree, as the source and cause of their becoming Christians, and of their salvation. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. i. 3–5.) He speaks the same language in his letter to Timothy: "Who hath saved us, and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) He also says, "Therefore I endure all things *for the sake of the elect*, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." (Chap. ii. 10.) The apostle had no expectation or desire of the salvation of any but the *elect*, whom God hath chosen to salvation from eternity. Therefore, when he had evidence that any person was a true believer and made holy, he considered it as the consequence and fruit of election, of his being chosen by God from the beginning, that is, from eternity. This is his language to the Christians at Thessalonica: "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, *because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation*, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

The apostle Peter sets this matter in the same light with Paul, and considers true Christians as elected to this privilege, and to eternal life, by the counsel and purpose of God, as the

* The foreknowledge of God is mentioned here, and in other places, as implying his purpose and decree of election. (See Acts ii. 23; xv. 18. Rom. viii. 29. 1 Peter i. 2.) The reason why this word is used to denote the divine determination, is because the foreknowledge of God does necessarily imply his purpose or decree with respect to the thing foreknown; for God foreknows what will be only by determining what shall be. Therefore foreknowledge and decrees cannot be separated; for they imply each other, if they be not one and the same. "Grotius, as well as Beza, observes that προγνωσις must here signify *decree;* and Elsner has shown it has that signification in approved Greek writers." — *Doddridge's note on Acts ii.* 23.

origin and foundation of all this good to them. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 1, 2.)

Whoever well considers these passages of Scripture, with others of the same tenor, and observes how consistent this doctrine is with the whole of the Scripture, which represents man as lost in sin, and wholly dependent on God for salvation, and, therefore, that their salvation must all originate in the sovereign purpose and grace of God, and how consistent this is with reason, and that it is, indeed, impossible it should be otherwise; — whoever takes a proper view of all this, must believe, and rest satisfied in the truth, that all the redeemed were chosen to salvation by the eternal purpose of God, as the origin and foundation of their salvation; and that they who are not thus elected, perish in their sins. And he who does not see this doctrine plainly revealed in the Bible, must be supposed to read it with strong prejudices against the truth, or with very wrong and false conceptions respecting the subject. To obviate and remove these, is the design of some part of the following.

V. The elect are not chosen to salvation rather than others, because of any moral excellence in them, or out of respect to any foreseen faith and repentance, or because their moral character is in any respect better than others. The difference between them and others, in this respect, whenever it takes place, is the fruit and consequence of their election, and not the ground and reason of it. All mankind are totally sinful, wholly lost and undone, in themselves, infinitely guilty and and ill deserving. And all must perish forever, were it not for electing grace, were they not selected from the rest, and given to the Redeemer to be saved by him, and so made vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory. This is abundantly declared in Scripture. This is strongly asserted in a passage which has been mentioned. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, *not of works*, but of him that calleth." In their election, they are predestinated to be conformed to Christ in true holiness, and not because it is foreseen they will, of their own accord, be holy, and chosen to salvation for the sake of this. They are elected, through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience.* Sanctification and obedience are the consequence of their election, and the privilege to which they are chosen; and not that out of regard to which they are chosen to salvation. The apostle tells the

elect at Ephesus, that electing love found them dead in trespasses and sins, as sinful as others, and as much the children of wrath. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. *Not of works*, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath *before ordained*, that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 1–10.) Election is a doctrine of grace; it is therefore called "the election of grace." "Even so then at this present time, also, there is a remnant *according to the election of grace*. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. xi. 5, 6.)

VI. The elect are not chosen to salvation, without holiness and obedience, or whether they be holy and obey Christ or not. This is asserted in the passages which have been quoted. Those who are chosen to salvation are predestinated, or ordained to be conformed to Christ. They are elected to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience. Holiness is part of the salvation to which they are elected, and they cannot be saved without it, which consists in activity and obedience. Therefore, no person can have any evidence that he is elected in any other way, but by making it evident that he is holy and obedient.

This, therefore, detects the great mistake and delusion in which they are who say, if they be elected they shall be saved, let them do what they will, and live and die in a course of allowed sin. No proposition can be more false than this. It is as contrary to the truth as it would be for a man to say, If it be appointed that I should live seven years, I shall live, though I die to-morrow. Or if it be appointed that I shall go to such a city, I shall go, though I do not go, and never move out of the place in which I now am.

This doctrine, therefore, affords no encouragement to sin, or to be indifferent and careless about holiness, obedience, and salvation; for this is as certainly the road to hell, if continued in, as if there were none elected to salvation; and holiness and care, watchfulness and diligence, in active obedience, are as reasonable, important, and necessary, as if this doctrine were not true.

VII. The use of proper means is as necessary in order to the salvation of the elect as it would be were none elected to salvation. As none are elected to salvation, without holiness, or

whether they be holy or not, because this is a contradiction, and impossible, so none can exercise holiness, and be obedient, without means; for this is as great a contradiction as the other; for it is the same as to suppose that a person may be holy and obedient, without knowledge, attention, and activity, or without holiness and obedience. Means are as necessary in order to convert and save the elect, and their persevering in holiness, as they would be if they were not elected.

This is illustrated in the story of the shipwreck of Paul and those with him. They were all elected to be saved from being lost at sea, and to arrive safe on shore. God had determined this in their favor, and revealed it to Paul, and he had published it to them who were with him in the ship. Yet when the seamen were about to leave the ship, who only had skill to manage it, "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." (Acts xxvii. 31.) They were elected to that salvation, and it was hereby made sure to them; but this did not render means and their activity useless, for they were elected to be saved in this way, and in no other; and, therefore, their salvation was not possible in any other way. And if the centurion had said to Paul, "If we are elected to be saved, though the seamen leave the ship, or if we use no means to get to the land, and take no care or thought about it, and though every one of us do what he can, or what he please, to drown himself and all the rest," he would have spoken contrary to reason and truth.

And there is as much encouragement to use means for the salvation of sinners, as if there were none elected to salvation, and much more; for there would indeed be no encouragement to use any means, or to do any thing for the salvation of any one, if none were elected to be saved; for if that were true, there would be no salvation for any. St. Paul, therefore, took his encouragement to travel round the world and preach, and and go through great labors and sufferings, from the doctrine of election, that he might be the means of saving some of the elect. He says, "Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 10.) And the Lord Jesus Christ encouraged him to persevere in preaching at Corinth, because he had much people in that city; that is, there were many elected to salvation in that city. (Acts xviii. 9, 10.) And there would be no reason or encouragement for any person to use any means, or do any thing, in order to be saved, if none were elected to salvation.

VIII. The doctrine of election, as it has been stated, does not represent God as *a respecter of persons*, as some have supposed.

To have respect to persons is to regard and treat them differently, on the account of some supposed or real difference in them or their circumstances, which is no real ground or good reason of such different regard, and treatment. As when a judge regards, justifies, and rewards one, rather than another, because he is rich and the other poor, or has given him a bribe, or is a near relation of his, or his particular friend, when the other is as really worthy of regard, and his cause more just. This character of a respecter of persons belongs rather to a judge, or one who is to regard and reward others, according to their different characters, which are the real ground and a good reason of making a difference; and is not applicable to a benefactor, in his granting favors, and free, undeserved gifts to one rather than another, where there is no desert of such favor in one more than another; and the favor is not granted under any such notion or pretence. The benefactor, in this case, has a right to do what he will with his own, and bestow his gifts in such a manner, and on such persons, as will best promote his own benevolent purposes and the general good. And he who is neglected, and does not receive any favor, as he has no claim to any, has no reason to complain.

IX. No injury is done to those who are not elected, by the election of others to salvation. No one of mankind has any desert of the least favor, but all the human race might justly have been left in a state of ruin, to be lost and miserable forever, and no injury would have been done to any. In this case, the showing favor to one, and saving him, is no injury to the other, who has no favor, and is left to perish; he deserves this as much as if none were saved, and his case is not rendered the worse, in any respect, merely because others do not suffer with him, who deserve it as much as he does; and if the actually making this difference, and saving some, and leaving others to perish, be no injury to the latter, and they have no cause to complain any more than if others perished with them, then the determination to do this, and electing some to salvation from eternity, and not electing all, is in no respect injurious to the non-elect, and is no ground of complaint. If a king pardon a certain number of those criminals who are justly condemned to be put to death, and give the rest up to be executed, they all equally deserving to die, he does no injury to the latter; they deserve to die as much, and their execution is as just, as if all were put to death. Mercy being showed to others gives them no claim to it, and they have no cause of complaint that the same undeserved favor is not showed to them. And it alters not the case, though the king had determined long before it took place to save some of the criminals

alive, and fixed on the individuals on whom he would bestow this favor, in distinction from the rest.

X. Salvation may be offered to all men, though only a certain number of them are chosen to salvation, and will be finally saved.

It is not necessary that all should certainly be saved, and that this should be known to be the event of making the offer of salvation to men, in order to make the offer of it to them with propriety. Men may have the offer of salvation, or of any other good thing, though they refuse to accept of it, and so never obtain it. This, it is presumed, none will deny.

Salvation may be offered to men, though it be certain and known to God, who makes the offer, that they will reject it, and so never be saved. If salvation may be offered to men, though they refuse to accept of it, and their rejecting it be not inconsistent with the offer being made, or their having the offer, then such offer may be made, though it be known and certain that they will reject it and perish; for this being *known* does not alter the case with respect to the offer; it is as really made, and as really rejected, as if it were not known, but it were wholly uncertain what the event would be. A rich man may offer an estate to a poor man, though he be certain that he will reject the offer, and die in poverty, as the consequence of his refusal to accept of the favor which is offered.

And if the offer of salvation may be truly and properly made, when it is known to him who makes the offer that it will be rejected, then it may be so made and rejected, though the knowledge of this imply the divine purpose and decree respecting the matter, or be founded upon it. The sinner is disposed to reject the offer of salvation, and will certainly reject it, unless his heart be renewed by the Spirit of God; but he being under no obligation to the sinner to do this in any instance, and his making the offer of salvation does not lay him under any such obligation, or infer it, he may determine not to do it, by which it is certain the sinner will not accept of it, and be saved. Notwithstanding this, the offer is really made, and the sinner really rejects it, and is as voluntary and criminal as if nothing were determined and foreknown respecting the event. Though God have power to renew every sinner's heart to whom the gospel is preached, and bring them all to embrace the gospel, and be saved, yet he has determined not to do it. And his making the offer of salvation does not imply that he will do it.

Though a rich man offer an estate to one that is poor, and it is in his power by some extraordinary means and exertions to persuade him to accept it, yet his making the offer lays

him under no obligation to effect it, though he know the consequence will be his rejecting it and dying in poverty. He may have good reason not to make those extraordinary exertions, and yet be sincere in the offer, on condition he is willing to accept it; and the poor man has the estate really offered to him, and he as really rejects it, and is as foolish and criminal in doing it, and as justly suffers the evil consequence, as if the rich man knew not what would be the consequence of making the offer, — whether it would be rejected or not, — and had no power, by any means, to persuade him, and make him willing to accept of it.

It is wise and important that salvation by Christ should be offered indiscriminately to all, in the publishing and preaching of the gospel, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. It has been observed that the gospel cannot be preached to any, to whom the offer of salvation is not made upon their acceptance of it. They who will comply with the offer, or the elect who shall come to Christ, live promiscuously, intermixed with others, and are not to be distinguished by men from others until they have the gospel preached to them, and thereby salvation is offered to them, and they believe and embrace the offer. Therefore, the gospel cannot be preached to them, unless it be preached to all. And, as it may be properly preached to all, and salvation be really offered to every one, whether he will accept of it or not, and the provision made for the salvation of sinners in the gospel is as sufficient for one as another, and it is offered as a free gift to every one who believeth, or will receive it, and none can fail of salvation, and perish under the gospel, but by constantly rejecting it to the end of life, therefore, it is important and necessary that this offer should be made to all, without any distinction, in order to the salvation of any, even the elect. Besides, this is necessary in order to set in the clearest light, and even to discover, the following important truths: —

1. That mankind are so fixed in their rebellion, and such obstinate opposers and enemies of God and all moral good, that they are disposed constantly, and with all their hearts, to reject mercy and salvation, though freely offered to them. Nothing is, or perhaps can be, more suited effectually to bring out and discover the exceeding wickedness and obstinacy of the heart of man than this. It is of great importance that a clear and full discovery of this should be made, in order to manifest to their consciences, and to all, the justice and propriety of the awful sentence which will be pronounced against the wicked at the last day.

2. That every one who fails of salvation under the gospel

perishes by his own fault and aggravated wickedness, obstinately persisted in through life, and must ascribe his loss of eternal life, and his falling into endless destruction, wholly to his own folly, — constantly and voluntarily rejecting salvation freely offered to him, — that he has *destroyed himself*, and nothing could have prevented his salvation, and have brought endless destruction upon him, — no decree of Heaven, nor Satan, nor any of his fellow-men, nor his outward circumstances, poverty or riches, honors and high stations, or a mean and low condition in the world, health or sickness, nor any temptation and trying situation in life whatsoever, — had he not, with all his heart, rejected the gospel, and constantly, through his whole life, refused to accept of the salvation which was offered to him, for which folly and sin he has not the least possible excuse.

This coincides with the preceding particular, and serves to show how important and necessary it is that they who perish from under the gospel should have salvation offered to them, as by this it will appear more clearly than otherwise it could, that sinners perish by their own fault, and can lay the blame of it to none but themselves, and that they are justly cast into endless destruction, however infinitely awful and dreadful it be.

And this will serve effectually to confute an assertion which many now make, and show the falsehood of it, viz., that *if they be not elected, they must be damned, whatever they may do.* It will appear, when the real truth comes to light, that they perish by rejecting the salvation offered to them, and that, if they had believed and been willing to be saved by Christ, they would not have been lost. Their destruction is the consequence of their great, inexcusable wickedness, in slighting Christ and neglecting the great salvation, — by which they have brought it on themselves, — which could not have come upon them had they not done this, but accepted of the kind offer which they had.

3. The offer of salvation to all serves more clearly to display and discover to the redeemed the riches of that sovereign grace by which they are saved. It is of great importance that this should be seen by the redeemed in the clearest light, and to the best advantage, that God may have the glory of it, and they the greatest benefit possible. While they see others perish under the same advantages which they have enjoyed, they see what they should have done had they not been distinguished by sovereign grace, and made willing in the day of divine power. They see the human heart acted out in the unbeliever, and the awful consequence in his perishing, and know this would have been their case had not God created in

them a new heart, and given them to believe on Christ, in consequence of his electing love. They see this, and give all the glory to sovereign grace, and, in a greater degree, are happy in the enjoyment of the love of God. St. Paul was sensible of the importance of Christians seeing and enjoying the great and distinguishing love of God to them, and of their giving all the glory to him, and, therefore, labors to set this in the strongest light in the first two chapters of his letter to the church at Ephesus, as he also does in most of his other epistles, which the attentive reader of the Bible must have observed.

That the offer of salvation is, in fact, made to all to whom the gospel is revealed, has been before proved;* and it may be added here, to the evidence there produced, that, if there were no other proof of this but the parables of Christ, recorded in Matt. xxii. and Luke xiv., these are sufficient to put it beyond dispute. There our Savior represents the gospel by a feast which is made, to which numbers are invited who refuse to come, and consequently never taste of the supper. The invitation is, "Come to the feast, come to the marriage, for all things are ready." How can this represent the gospel, if salvation be not offered to those who never accept of the offer? But to return: salvation is, in fact, offered to all, wherever the gospel is published. Some have supposed this to be inconsistent with the doctrine of election, as it has been stated; but it is hoped that what has been offered has sufficiently proved that they are both consistent with each other.

XI. The doctrine of election is so far from being a discouraging doctrine, that it affords the only ground of all true encouragement and hope.

Many have been so grossly mistaken as to think this a gloomy, discouraging doctrine, and that it tends to lead persons to despair; whereas, it is the only well-grounded support against despair, and the sole foundation of all reasonable hope of salvation. It does, indeed, tend to cut off all *their* hopes of salvation, who build them upon themselves, — their own good disposition, will, and exertions, independent of God, — supposing they shall determine it in their own favor, and, in this sense, save themselves. The doctrine of election demolishes this foundation, and destroys such a hope, as it teaches that man is absolutely dependent on God for his salvation, and *he* must determine whether he shall be saved or not. As this, therefore, is a false hope, and dangerous delusion, it is desirable it should be destroyed; and it affords an argument in favor of this doctrine that it tends to take away all such hope from man.

* See Vol. I. p. 493, etc.

When persons are brought to know themselves in some measure, and see how guilty and lost they are, how sinful and obstinate their hearts are, being wholly corrupt, and so strongly indisposed to any thing that is right, and inclined to evil, that if left to themselves, they never shall repent and embrace the gospel, but shall go on to certain destruction, — therefore, if God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, have not determined in their favor that he will give them a new heart, and save them by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, they shall not be saved, but be certainly lost forever, — they despair of distinguishing themselves, so as to render themselves more deserving of the favor of God, and of salvation, or less ill deserving than others; they know of no greater sinners than themselves, or more deserving of endless destruction, or farther from embracing the gospel, than they are, and always shall be, if left to themselves. Their only hope, therefore, is in the revealed purpose of God to save some of mankind, without any regard to their desert of it, or their distinguishing themselves from others, not being so great sinners, or being less unworthy; but God has mercy on whom he will have mercy; and they have no reason to conclude they are not of this number, but may hope they are elected to salvation, though utterly lost in themselves, and the most guilty and vile of all others.

It is true, that some have abused this doctrine, and improved it to bad purposes to themselves, through their ignorance, the perverseness of their own hearts, and the cunning agency of Satan, the deceiver. They have not been willing to be in the hand of God, and wholly dependent on him; and the thought that they are so has irritated and galled their spirits; they have been such enemies to God that they have concluded he will decide against them, if it be left to him to determine whether they shall be saved or not; and knowing they have greatly offended him, they conclude that they are not among the number of the elect, and so sink into despair. It is not the doctrine of election, or the belief of it, which produces this despair, or has any tendency to it, but the opposition of the heart to it, and drawing a wrong and false conclusion from it; for this doctrine has a direct contrary tendency and effect, when properly improved, as has been shown.

XII. The doctrine of election is perfectly consistent with the greatest possible degree of human liberty.

This has been particularly considered in the chapter upon the decrees of God, and need not be repeated here. Many have entertained such wrong notions of this doctrine, and of

liberty, or the freedom of the will, as to suppose, if this were true, the non-elect are chained down to destruction, and the elect fixed in a state of salvation, inconsistent with their exercising any freedom of choice. The divine purpose of election does not affect the liberty of any man, unless the certainty of events be inconsistent with it. It is certain it is not, if liberty consists in acting voluntarily, or in volition, which it is presumed has been proved; and that there can be no other or higher liberty in nature. The elect are perfectly free in embracing the gospel, and in all their exercises, and in every step they take, in order to obtain complete salvation. This is necessarily supposed in their election to eternal life; for they can be saved in no other way but by their free choice, which is, therefore, secured in their election, that they shall go to heaven by their own free consent, in the full exercise of perfect liberty, in opposition to any compulsion. Whatever God decrees or does, respecting their salvation, does not interfere with their freedom, but infallibly secures and establishes it. *He worketh in them, to will and to do;* therefore, does nothing inconsistent with their willing and doing, but promotes and effects it, in which all their freedom and moral agency consist.

The non-elect go to destruction by their own choice. When salvation is offered to them, they reject it with their whole heart, and most freely choose to have no part in it. They *will not come* to Christ, that they might be saved. The election of others to salvation does not affect them, or alter their case or circumstances in the least. They go to destruction just as freely, and as much by their own choice, as they would or could do were there none elected to be saved; and their destruction is not made any more necessary or certain, by the election of some of mankind to salvation, than it would have been were there no election.

XIII. Though it be known that a certain number of mankind are elected by God to salvation, in distinction from others, because it is revealed, and the reason of the thing teaches it must be so, yet it cannot be known to men in this world who they are that are elected and shall be saved, any farther than there is evidence that they embrace the gospel, and are become true Christians. This is otherwise known to God alone. He knows them by name, and they are given to Christ to be saved. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) But this cannot be known to men, nor can there be the least real evidence, till they come to Christ, nor any appearance of it, any farther than they appear to be real Christians. In this way, the apostle Paul judged of the election of

persons. "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And ye became followers of me, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 4–6.) It is in this way alone that believers can come to the knowledge of their election, or get the least evidence of it. This evidence will be perfectly established when they are actually saved, and shall abide so forever. Every one of the redeemed will know his own election of God, and that of all others who are saved, and will look to this as the source and foundation of their redemption.

While the elect are in a state of unbelief, none in this world, neither they themselves, nor any one else, can know they are elected and shall be saved. And the non-elect cannot know that they are not elected, nor can any one else know this of them, while they are in this world, unless it be known that they have committed the unpardonable sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. The doctrine of election, as it has now been stated and explained, is suited to stain and humble the pride of man.

The pride of man prompts him to lift himself above his Maker, and he would do it, were it possible; and many fondly think themselves, in a measure, independent of him, especially in matters of the greatest importance, respecting their moral character, and their eternal interest and happiness; that their life is in their own hands, so far that they can determine whether they shall be virtuous and holy, and be saved, or not, without any determination of God respecting it, or his unpromised, undeserved, special influence or assistance, to turn the point in their favor. And nothing can be more crossing and mortifying to this pride, than to be absolutely dependent on God for all moral good, as a free, undeserved gift from him, and for salvation, so that the whole must be determined by God, and not by man, any farther than it is the effect of the divine determination. Such absolute dependence on God for holiness and salvation is implied and held forth in the doctrine of election, and no man can understandingly and cordially receive it, so as to have the feelings of his heart conformable to it, without "humbling himself in the sight of the Lord."

Every doctrine of the gospel, and the whole system of revealed truth, is levelled directly at the pride of the human

heart, and suited to humble man; and when it has its proper effect, and is cordially received, this pride is slain and relinquished; and what God, by Isaiah, foretold should be the effect of it, takes place in a very sensible, conspicuous degree. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Isa. ii. 11, 12.) Therefore, humility, in opposition to pride and self-exaltation, was frequently mentioned by our divine Teacher, as essential to a Christian; and he often said, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (See Matt. xviii. 4; xxiii. 12. Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14.) And the apostle James says to sinners, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James iv. 10.)

This is an evidence, among others, that the doctrine of election is a doctrine of the gospel, in that it coincides, in this respect, with all the peculiar doctrines of divine revelation, in being suited to humble the pride of man, and exalt the sovereign grace of God; and, therefore, must be agreeable to the heart of every humble Christian. In this view, it is no wonder that it should be so strongly opposed and rejected with great abhorrence and confidence by men, with all the other most humble doctrines of the gospel, and a scheme of sentiments be introduced in their room, which are really subversive of the gospel, and suited not to abase, but to flatter and gratify the pride of man, according to which he has something which he did not receive, even true virtue and holiness, the highest excellence and glory of man; and by this has made himself to differ from others, without any special distinguishing influence of God; and in this respect is independent of him, which he therefore ascribes not to the grace of God, but to himself, and glories in it. The following sentence of St. Paul is levelled at this pride and haughtiness of man, and if properly regarded, sufficient to demolish it. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst *receive it*, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.)

The humbling doctrine of election may be, indeed, abused, and so improved as to gratify the pride of man, while it is not really understood, nor in truth cordially received. A man may be led to conclude, even from the pride of his heart and without any reason, that he is elected to salvation, and herein distinguished by God from most others; and this may be very pleasing to his pride, while he does not understand, and in his heart admit, the only ground of this distinction, when made by God. And he, at bottom, feels as if he was distinguished from

others, and had received this peculiar favor out of respect to some good thing in him, by which he differed from others; or he attends only to *the distinction itself*, without considering the ground of it, and is pleased with this, and becomes a zealous, *proud* advocate for the doctrine of election. Therefore, many of the opposers of this doctrine suppose, that all who are advocates for it are pleased with it only from selfishness and pride, because they consider themselves as the elect of God, and hereby distinguished and favored above others. And there is, perhaps, no other way for pride to account for it, or to be reconciled to it. The true Christian receives it as glorious to God, and exalting sovereign grace and humbling man, while he considers himself as infinitely guilty and vile, and wholly lost in his sins, and if he be saved, it must be by the distinguishing, sovereign grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, according to his decree of election, which affords the only ground of hope to man.

II. What has been said in this section on the doctrine of particular election, may serve to discover and state the character of a true Christian, so far as his views and exercises relate to this doctrine and those connected with it.

1. This is not a discouraging doctrine to him, nor disagreeable, though he do not know that he is a Christian, or is elected to salvation, but has great and prevailing doubts of this. He knows that if he were left to himself, he should not determine the point in his own favor, but his impenitent, unbelieving heart would reject Christ, and he go on to destruction. That he is wholly dependent on God for salvation, and if *he* do not determine in his favor, and have not elected him to salvation, and do not distinguish him from others by granting him those influences and that renovation which they who perish have not, he shall not be saved, but perish forever. Therefore, the doctrine of election can be no matter of discouragement to him; it cannot render his case worse than it would be if none were elected; for then he could have no hope of salvation, and the only hope he can have is grounded on this doctrine, and that he may be one of the elect. And his hope rises or sinks according to the evidence he has of this, by perceiving himself to be the subject of the regenerating, sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, or the contrary.

2. The true believer is pleased with being entirely dependent on God for his salvation, and that he should determine whether he shall be saved or not; and does not desire that he himself or others should be saved in any other way, but according to the eternal purpose of God. It is most disagreeable to him that any creature should determine this, in any one in-

stance. He knows it belongs to God to decide this important matter; that he has a right to do it, and he only is able to determine it perfectly right, agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness, so as shall be most for his glory, and promote the interest of his kingdom. He is pleased that, in this way, God is exalted in the exercise of sovereign grace, and the sinner humbled, and the most important interest forever secured and promoted in the best manner. He desires no other salvation for himself or others, but that which is the free gift of God and the fruit of his electing love, and which infinite wisdom sees will be most for the glory of God, and the general good; and that without knowing whether *his* salvation be consistent with this or not, and whether he be one of the elect or not.

3. All the Christian's prayers and devotions are upon this plan, and agreeable to this doctrine. They contain in them either an express or implicit acknowledgment of his entire dependence on God for salvation, and every thing for which he prays or gives thanks, and that all the good he desires must be the fruit of the determination of him who changes not in his purpose and design, and express, or imply, an unconditional, implicit resignation to his wise and holy will.

The opposers of this doctrine, in heart and words, do often really acknowledge it in words, in their prayers to God for salvation, etc.; but the real Christian does it with his heart. He may, indeed, through the prejudices of education, or otherwise, by not understanding the doctrine in theory, and entertaining wrong conceptions of it, and of other points which are connected with it, be led to oppose it in speculation; but so far as his heart is renewed, all his religious exercises and devotions are agreeable to the doctrine of election, and an acknowledgment of it; and so far as it appears that any person is at heart an enemy to that doctrine, there is just so much evidence that he is an enemy to him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Section VIII.

Whether any of the redeemed arrive to perfect Holiness in this Life.

That no man, whatever his advantages and attainments may be, does arrive to sinless perfection in this life, seems to be clearly asserted in a number of passages of Scripture. Solomon says, "There is no man that sinneth not. There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (1 Kings viii. 46. Ec. vii. 20. Pr. xx. 9.) These are strong expressions, asserting that there is no man on earth so perfect as to be wholly without sin. Job says, "If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." (Job ix. 20.) How could his saying he was perfect, prove him to be perverse, unless it be on this ground, that no man is perfect in this life? This being certain, if a man say he is perfect, it proves that he is deceived, and knows not the truth, and therefore is not a good man. The apostle Paul, who probably was the holiest man that ever lived, declares he was not perfect. "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 12–14.) And he gives such a particular and sad description of his own sinfulness, in his letter to the church at Rome, that many who are strangers to the corruption of the human heart, and the great degree of sin attending true Christians, and their keen sensibility of it, cannot believe that he means there to describe his own exercises and character, or those of any Christian. (See Rom. vii. 14–24.) And this same apostle represents all Christians as in a state of warfare, by reason of evil inclinations and lusts in their hearts, which oppose that which is the fruit of the Spirit in them, and prevents their doing what they would. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.) To will was present. When they look forward, they wished actually to do and be all that which Christianity dictates, and of which they could have any idea; but when they came to act, they always fell short, and sinful inclinations prevented their doing as they desired, and defiled their best exercises.

The apostle James testifies to the same truth. He says of himself, and of all Christians, that in many things they all offended. (James iii. 2.) And the apostle John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) Here it is not only asserted that every Christian is attended with sin in all he does in this life, but that it is so evident to the real Christian, and so much his sensible burden and unhappiness, that it is certain that he who says, or thinks he has no sin, is not only greatly deceived, but is a stranger to real Christianity, and knows not the saving truth.

These passages of Scripture are decisive, and prove that it is made certain, by a divine constitution, that no man shall be without sin in this life; for these are declarations from God of this truth. Solomon could not say, "There is no man that sinneth not," "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not," if there were not a divine constitution which rendered it certain that the most righteous and best of men are not without sin in this life; for this is affirmed of *man*, — of every man in this world, in every age of it, from the beginning to the end of it. How could the apostle Paul say to a Christian church, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," — and how could the apostles John and James say, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," "In many things we all offend," — if this were not true of all, and common to all Christians at all times? It is impossible they should say this under inspiration, were there not a known constitution of Heaven, that no man should be free from sin in this life. Therefore, these declarations demonstrate that there is such a constitution, — that God has determined, and made it known, that no man shall live in the body without sinning.

Hence we may be certain that when the apostle John says, "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him," — "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," (1 John iii. 6, 9,) — he does not mean to assert that every true Christian, or any one of them, is free from sin in this life, for then he would expressly contradict himself in this same letter; but his meaning in the last-quoted passages must be, that he who is born of God, and united to Christ by faith, does not sin as others do, or as he did before he was born of God. He no longer *lives in sin*, and makes it his trade and business, as the unregenerate do, but lives a holy life, devoted to Christ, though attended with much imperfection and sin. If this be not his meaning, which is a natural and easy one, he not only contradicts what he had said in the words quoted from the first chapter, by asserting that Christians *may* live without sin in this world, but asserts that every one that is born of God does not, from that time, commit one sin, or have the least degree of sin in his heart or conduct; which few or none of those who have made use of these passages, to prove Christians may be perfectly holy in this life, do believe is true; so that these words prove too much, or nothing at all for them.

Christians are frequently represented as being *perfect*, in distinction from those who are not real Christians, or from other real Christians who are not *perfect*. This has been improved as an argument, that some Christians do obtain sinless perfection in this life, supposing that this is intended by being perfect. But the careful reader of the Bible will find that *to be perfect* has a various and different meaning, when used with respect to different subjects and relations. When used with respect to God, it means *absolute perfection;* in which sense it is not applicable to any creature, especially to man in this state. When applied to Christians, it sometimes means real sincerity and uprightness of heart, or their being real Christians, or good men, in distinction from those who are so only in appearance and pretence. In this sense Hezekiah appears to use it, when he says, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart." (Isa. xxxviii. 3.) And in this sense God speaks of Job as a perfect and upright man. (Job i. 8.) Job himself uses the word in a different sense, when he says, "If I say I am perfect, it would prove me perverse," (Job ix. 20,) — otherwise, he would contradict his Maker and himself too; for he held his integrity fast, and appealed to God that he was upright. (Job xxxi. 6.) Sometimes it means whole and entire Christians, acting out every Christian grace, or every branch of Christianity, in distinction from those who were defective in some Christian attainments, while they appeared to be chiefly attentive to others. And sometimes they are called perfect who have made greater proficiency in the Christian life, and are stronger and more thorough Christians, in distinction from the weaker, and those of less attainments. He who carefully studies his Bible will find that Christians are not said to be perfect in any higher sense than these. The apostle Paul, in a fore-cited place, says that he did not think himself perfect, yet, in the very next words, speaks of himself and others as being perfect. "Let us, therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded." (Phil. iii. 12–15.) He must use the word in two different senses, otherwise he would contradict himself. When he says he does not think or pretend that he is perfect, he means sinless perfection. When he says, "as many of us as be perfect," he means those who had made considerable improvement and advances in Christianity; not being, in this respect, babes, or children, but grown men. (Heb. v. 13, 14.)

It is, certainly, the duty of all Christians to be perfectly holy, in obedience to the law of God, requiring them to love God with all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and their neighbors as themselves. And every thing contrary

to this, or short of it, which takes place in their hearts or lives, is criminal. The law cannot be abated, nor their obligation to obey it perfectly annulled, in the least degree. But it does not follow from this that any one does, or will, come up to the rule, and do the whole of his duty in this life. For this the Christian depends wholly upon God. He is no further holy than he is made so by the omnipotent energy of the Divine Spirit; and though God requires them to be perfectly holy, yet he is under no obligation, by promise or any other way, to make them perfectly holy in this world. His requiring it of them does not imply any such obligation, and the covenant of grace contains no promise of this. In that there is a divine promise that they shall persevere in holiness to the end of life, and that they shall be perfectly holy in his kingdom forever; for this is necessarily implied in perfect happiness and eternal life. But it contains no promise of any particular degree of holiness, more than is necessary to prevent their falling, totally and finally, from a state of grace. As to the degree of holiness, and the particular exercises of it, in every Christian, God orders it as he pleases, to answer his own wise and infinitely good purposes.

The Redeemer is able to make every believer perfectly holy, from his first conversion, so that he never should be guilty of another sin; and, if this had been wisest and best, it would have been so ordered. Therefore, we are certain it is most wise and best that none of the redeemed should be perfectly holy in this life, though we were unable to see any reason why it is so. But we may *now* see some of the wise ends which are answered hereby, and reasons why the redeemed are in such an imperfect state, and in so great a degree sinful, while in this world, — a few of which will be mentioned here.

1. If they were perfectly holy, they would not be so fit to live in this disordered, sinful world. There would not be that analogy of one thing to another, which is observed in the works of God, and which is proper and wise. This is not a world and state suited to be the dwelling-place of perfectly holy creatures. It is a proper state of discipline, suited to form and train up the redeemed from among men for a state of perfect holiness and happiness in another world.

2. If Christians were perfectly holy in this life, it would not be so much a state of trial as now it is. Their temptations could not be so many and strong as now they are, and Satan could not have so much power and advantage to tempt and try to distress and seduce them; and their danger would not be so great and visible; and they would not have that opportunity or occasion of the exercise of some particular graces,

such as constant humiliation and repentance for their renewed sins, loathing and abhorring themselves, fighting against and mortifying their own lusts, longing for deliverance, and faith and patience in these dark and disagreeable circumstances, as now they have, by which they honor Christ, and are preparing for greater happiness and rewards in his kingdom.

3. Such a state of imperfection and sin is suited and necessary more effectually to teach them, and make them know by abundant experience, their own total depravity by nature, the evil nature and odiousness of sin, their own ill desert, the exceeding, inexpressible, and inconceivable deceitfulness, obstinacy, and wickedness of their own hearts; and their absolute dependence on sovereign grace, to prevent their eternal destruction, and to save them; their need of the atonement which Christ has made, and the greatness of that power and grace which saves such creatures. These, and many other things, are more thoroughly and effectually impressed on their minds, and they are instructed, and learn them to better advantage in the school of Christ, in this state of imperfection and sin, than could be in a state of perfect holiness.

King David, by falling into sin, was led to reflect upon, and confess, his native depravity; the exceeding evil of sin, as against God; his desert of destruction, and the justice of God in punishing him; his need of pardon and of an atonement, and of the renovation of his heart; and his dependence on God for this. On that occasion, the following is his language: "According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. li. 1–5, 10.)

4. Believers, by being sanctified but in part, and attended with so much sin in this life, obtain a more clear view, and greater sense of the evil of sin, and the miserable state of the sinner; and are hereby prepared to know and enjoy the happiness of a perfectly holy state, to a greater degree than otherwise they could. The more sensible they are of the evil from which they are delivered, the greater will the positive good which they enjoy appear to them. And their gratitude and praise for the sovereign grace, of which they are the subjects, will rise proportionably higher, by which God will be more glorified, and they more happy forever; so that all this will

turn to their good in the end, and they will be much more happy than if they had been perfectly holy from their conversion, and had not, after that, gone through a state of conflict with sin and Satan, and through much tribulation entered into the kingdom of heaven.

5. By this, the power, wisdom, goodness, truth, and faithfulness of the Redeemer are, in a peculiar manner, exercised and displayed, as they could not be in any other way. This gives occasion and opportunity for the most apparent and glorious manifestation of these; by which he glorifies himself, and the happiness of the redeemed is greatly advanced. Therefore, it is, on the whole, most wise and best, that the work of sanctification should be gradual, and not perfected at once; and that the saints should be sanctified but in part while in this world, and attended with much imperfection and sin to the end of life.

The exceeding greatness of the power of God is exerted and displayed in renewing the depraved heart of man, and forming it to true holiness. (Eph. i. 19.) It is a power which subdues the obstinacy, and all possible opposition of the human heart, and which overcomes and casts out Satan and all his host of combined enemies to God and man. Therefore, this is a greater exertion of power than that by which the natural world was made, for that was formed out of nothing; therefore, there could be no opposition and resistance to creating power in that instance. And the power displayed in creating holiness appears as much greater and more excellent than that which is exerted in creating the natural world, as the former effect is greater, more important, and excellent than the latter.

But this power is made more conspicuous and sensible, in preserving and maintaining a small degree of holiness in the heart of a Christian in the midst of the opposition with which he is surrounded and assaulted, by the strength of evil propensities within him, by the world, and by Satan, than it would be in forming him to perfect holiness at once. In this way, the weak Christian, in the midst of strong temptations and potent enemies, constantly seeking, and exerting all their power and cunning to devour and destroy him, is preserved and upheld, through a course of trial, by the mighty, omnipotent hand of the Redeemer; and the little spark of holiness implanted in the believer's heart is continued alive and burning, while there is so much, both within and without, tending to extinguish it, which is really more of a constant miracle and manifestation of the power of Christ, than it would be to preserve a little spark of fire, for a course of years, in the midst of the sea, while the mighty waves are fiercely dashing against it

and upon it, attempting to overwhelm and extinguish it. The Christian is, by this situation and his experience, made more and more sensible of this, and learns that he lives by the power of Christ, and repairs to this, that he may be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," or his mighty power, that he may be able to stand and persevere in the midst of enemies. (Eph. vi. 10.) Out of weakness, he is made strong and becomes valiant in the spiritual combat. (Heb. xi. 34.) And Christ, by these babes and sucklings, ordains and displays strength, and perfects praise. To this the apostle Paul attests. "My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, *that the power of Christ may rest upon me*." (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

The wisdom of the Redeemer is also employed and manifested in carrying all believers, and the church militant in general, through this life, and to the end of the world, safe to a state of perfection in glory. He conducts all things, external and internal, with respect to every Christian, and so orders the degree, manner, and time of his influence and assistance, as to keep them from falling totally and finally, and carries on the work of sanctification in the wisest manner, and so as to defeat Satan in all his wiles and cunning devices, by which he attempts to seduce and destroy them. It requires infinite skill and wisdom to sanctify a corrupt heart, and to order every thing so, with respect to each individual, at all times, and every moment, as effectually to prevent his falling away, though he walks upon the verge of ruin, and has such strong enemies within him and without; and so adjust every circumstance, that even those things and events which seem to be calculated for his ruin, shall promote his holiness and salvation. Were there no such persons, weak, and very imperfect and sinful, to live in a world full of enemies, and to be conducted on through all dangers, in the midst of cunning enemies, having great skill and success in destroying men, and carried safe to heaven at last, there would be no opportunity for such exercise and display of infinite, unsearchable wisdom as this gives. Were not the Redeemer as wise as he is powerful, no Christian could be saved; but on his wisdom they may and do rely with confidence, comfort, and joy. In his hands, they and the whole church are safe, and all adverse things shall work for good, and issue in their perfection in holiness, and eternal salvation. And well may they with admiration exclaim with the apostle Paul: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.) And in heaven they will ascribe wisdom to the Redeemer forever. (Rev. v. 12.)

The goodness, tender love, and wonderful condescension of the Savior are also manifest, and acted out in his constant and kind attendance on believers, though they be so imperfect and sinful, and offend in so many things, and are constantly guilty of that which would be sufficient to provoke him to give them up to sin and ruin, were he not infinitely good and kind. There is much more opportunity to exercise and discover this goodness and condescending grace, forbearance, and long-suffering, than if they were perfectly innocent and holy from the time of their conversion. This remark is illustrated by the character and conduct of the true disciples of Christ, when he was on earth, in the human nature, and his goodness, condescension, and forbearance towards them. They had, and discovered much selfishness and pride, worldliness, ingratitude, stupidity, and unbelief. They were slow of heart to believe, to learn, and get understanding, under the teaching of Christ, and in his school, while he was so abundant in his labors with them. They were honest and true friends to their master, but did not improve the advantages which they had, as they ought to have done, and in many instances grossly abused them; yet Christ did not leave off his kindness to them, but bore with them in all their dulness and wickedness, and loved them unto the end, and took effectual methods to cure all of them of their great moral disorders, and prepare them to enter into a state of perfect holiness at death, except Judas the traitor, who never was a true disciple. Had they been perfectly holy from the time they commenced his disciples, or at any time while he was with them, there would not have been such occasion and opportunity for Christ to exercise and discover such condescending grace and long-suffering towards them.

Thus he treats all his true disciples while in this life. Their imperfections and sins, and froward dispositions, by which they abuse him in all his goodness to them, call for infinite condescension, grace, and forbearance, in the continuance of his loving-kindness to them. They are, in some measure, sensible of this while in this world, and lament their sinful defects and great wickedness, and admire the goodness and patience of the Redeemer, in bearing with them, and not casting them into hell; but still continue very far from what they know they ought to be. But in heaven they will see this in a more clear light, and forever remember, and with the most sensible gratitude admire and adore the condescension and wonderful grace, which the Savior exercised towards them while they were so stupid, perverse, and abusive. This could not take place, were real Christians perfectly holy in this life.

The truth and faithfulness of the Redeemer are also, by this,

tried and made conspicuous. He promises that he will never leave nor forsake, or cast out them who come to him, and enter into covenant with him. And he fulfils his word, and is faithful to them, though they are in such an awful and provoking degree perverse and abusive. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down; for the Redeemer upholdeth them with his hand. (Ps. xxxvii. 24.) When they transgress, he often visits their sin with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. He chastiseth them for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness; yet he will not utterly take away his loving-kindness from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. (Ps. lxxxix. 30–33.)

Thus the wisdom and goodness of God appear, in ordering it so that no man, even the greatest saint, shall be perfectly holy in this life; but all the redeemed shall, in this world, be very imperfect and sinful, from the reasons which have been mentioned, and the ends which are answered hereby. More might be thought of and mentioned, and there is no reason to think that the one half are discerned by us now. A clear and full view of the wisdom and goodness of God in this is reserved to the future state, when the redeemed will review all the dispensations of Heaven, and the wise counsel and works of him who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" towards themselves and the church, with wonder, gratitude, and everlasting joy, "Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." (Rev. v. 12, 13.)

But though the wisdom and goodness of God appear in ordering it so that no man in this life shall attain to sinless perfection, and that the church on earth should, by passing through a state of discipline, trial, and temptation, be trained up for a perfectly holy and happy state in heaven, and that this shall be the common lot of Christians; yet, for equally wise reasons, there are some exceptions with respect to the latter. Some are taken out of the world immediately, or soon after their conversion, and are made perfectly holy, without passing through a scene of trial, temptation, and sinful imperfection. The thief who was converted on the cross is an instance of this. And how many are converted on their death-bed and just before they pass into the invisible world, cannot be certainly determined by us, while in this state; and all the infants who are saved are instances of this.

It has been a question with some, whether Christians ought

to pray that they may be perfectly holy in this life. Some have thought this question must be answered in the affirmative, and that believers may, and ought to, pray for perfect holiness while in this world, since it is their duty to be perfectly holy, and it is desirable, and, therefore, ought to be desired; and, consequently, they may and ought to pray for it.

Answer. It is, in itself considered, desirable to be perfectly holy; and this must appear desirable to all Christians, viewed in and by itself. But as God has determined and declared this shall not be, that any man shall be without sin in this life; and, therefore, it is known that it is not, on the whole, best that any man should be perfectly holy in this world; in this view of it, it is not desirable, nor ought any to pray for it. An event which is contrary to the known will of God that it should take place, is not desirable, in this view of it, and no one ought to pray that it may take place; for such a desire and prayer is opposition to the declared will of God, and carries in it real rebellion against him. No man ought to pray for any thing without an entire resignation to the will of God: therefore, he ought not to pray for any thing but on supposition that it is agreeable to the will of God. But no such supposition can be made, when God has already declared it is not agreeable to his will to grant it. It has been proved, that God has revealed that it is not his will that any man shall be perfectly holy in this life; therefore, no man can, in this view of it, pray for perfect holiness while in this life, with resignation to the will of God; and, therefore, ought not to pray for it. This would be praying for that which is known not to be desirable, and not wisest and best that it should take place, and is opposition to the known will of God, which is opposition to God.

Therefore, it is not to be supposed that a Christian does ever pray that he may be perfectly holy in this life, while he has a full conviction in his mind that it is contrary to the revealed will of God that this should ever take place in any instance. But a Christian may not have attended to the evidence there is from the Bible, that no man is to be perfectly holy in this life; or through some prejudice not be convinced that this is there revealed, and consequently may pray that he may be perfectly holy while in this world, and not know or believe that he asks for that which is contrary to the will of God to grant. In this case his sin consists in not properly attending to what God has revealed concerning this, or in not believing it, though the evidence be clearly set before him.

And as the Christian is not omniscient, and sees not every truth at once, or with equal clearness and constancy, of which

he has been convinced in theory and speculation, and one thing has a vastly greater impression on his mind than another, and at different times the same truth may have much more of his attention than at another, and make a more sensible impression; it is, therefore, possible that he should have such a clear view and great and sensible impression of his own sinfulness, of the evil of sin and the hatefulness of it, and of the desirableness of deliverance from it, and of being perfectly holy and conformed to Christ, as earnestly to pray that, if it be consistent with the will of God, he may be freed from all sin, and live a perfectly holy life for time to come; not at that time reflecting, that God has revealed that no man shall be so in this life, or thinking any more of it than if it were not true: and yet he cannot be said to *disbelieve* it; for as soon as it comes into his view, and he reflects upon it, he believes it, and withdraws his petition. This is doubtless possible, and may have taken place in many instances, and perhaps is not sinful.*

* Perhaps the prayer of the Redeemer may well be accounted for in this way, when he said in the garden, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 39.) The human mind of Christ had such a view and sense of the sufferings which were before him, that it was in a degree overborne and swallowed up with the dreadfulness of them, and the impossibility of his going through them without more divine assistance than he then experienced. And it was so ordered by God, that the absolute necessity of his suffering thus should not then be in view, his mind being wholly arrested by the view and sense of his sufferings, and the dreadfulness of the cup which was then set before him, and the human nature did, in a sense, shrink back at the view of it; and in this situation of mind, he prayed as above. It was wise and important that the human nature of the Redeemer should be placed in such a situation at this time, for two reasons. *First.* That he might have the best opportunity to discover his disposition, and how he would act under this severe trial, when his sufferings were set before him in all the greatness and dreadfulness of them. The dreadful cup was set before him, that he might have the clearest sight of it; and, in this situation, discover what he chose, and whether he was willing to drink it, if necessary for the glory of God and the salvation of the elect, and make the choice in the sight of all worlds, that he might be, and appear to be, perfectly voluntary, and take this suffering upon himself, when he was in a situation to have the clearest view and greatest sense possible of the evil to be suffered, of the dreadful ingredients of the bitter cup. In this most trying situation, he voluntarily gave himself up to this dreadful suffering, if this were necessary and the will of his Father: the latter not being present and so impressed on his mind as the former, as a certain reality; and so was in a measure out of view, and did not demand his particular attention, in consequence of a particular divine influence on his mind at that time. *Secondly.* By this, the necessity of the Redeemer's suffering as he did, in order to the pardon and salvation of sinners, and the impossibility of their being saved in any other way but by his making atonement for their sin by his own blood, and being made a curse in their stead, was set in a most clear and striking light. Since the infinitely worthy Redeemer, the only begotten, well beloved Son of God did not consent to suffer on any other supposition, and earnestly prayed that he might not suffer, if it were possible for him to be released from it, consistent with the glory of God and the salvation of sinners, his petition would have been granted, if it were possible that he should not suffer and yet these ends be answered.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. From the subject of this section, we may be certain that they are not real Christians who say or think they are arrived to such a perfect state as to live without sin. A Christian may, through the prejudices of education, ignorance, or otherwise, think that some Christians may, and actually do, attain to sinless perfection in this life; but he can never think *himself* to be without sin. His acquaintance with the law of God, in the spirituality and extent of it, and with his own heart, is such, that by keeping these in view, and comparing them with each other, his own sinfulness stares him in the face; and he condemns himself before God as very far from what he ought to be, and exceeding guilty and vile. And the higher he rises in holy exercises, and the more circumspect and watchful he is, the greater light and discerning he has to see the defects and corruptions of his own heart; and the more painful is the view of his own character, and he is disposed to exclaim with the apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" (Rom. vii. 24.)

The apostle John decides this point in most express terms. He says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) He does not mean, "if we say we never did sin," because this is contrary to his express words, which are in the present time, if we say *we have no sin* now, at this present time. According to this, no man can with truth say, at any time of his life, "I have no sin, or I am without sin, and perfectly holy." Therefore, no real Christian will say it, or can think this of himself; none but those who are deceived about themselves to such a degree as is inconsistent with their being the children of light and of the day, can say, or even think, this of themselves. This apostle, in the next verse but one, speaks of the time past, and says, "If we say that *we have not sinned*, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." This is a different proposition from the foregoing; it respects what they had been and done. If they had no sin now, and this could be said with truth, they could not say they had never sinned, without contradicting the whole gospel, which declares all men to be sinners, and so making God the Savior a liar. But the other proposition respects what they were at that time, or should be in any future time, while in this world; so that none who is not deceived, and has embraced the truth, can ever say or think, while in this life, that he now has no sin. There have been, and now are, those who say they have no sin. By this they declare they

are deceived and strangers to real Christianity, and give greater evidence that they are not true Christians than they could by only saying, in express words, that they are not; for persons may really think, and may say, that they are not Christians, when they are really such.

II. From this subject we learn, that persons have no reason to conclude they are no Christians, merely because they see much sin in themselves. This sight of sin often arises from their having that discerning which none but true Christians have, who, by reason of this discerning, see more sin in themselves than others do, and are more affected with it. And their complaints of themselves, of the amazing corruption and wickedness of their hearts, which they now see more clearly than ever before, and which they mention as an evidence that they have no grace, are often, in the view of the judicious Christian to whom they are made, an evidence that they are real Christians.

Great degrees of sin are consistent with some degree of true holiness. Therefore, if any thing can be found that is of the nature of holiness, a sight of great sinfulness is not an evidence against a person that he is not a Christian, but the contrary. They who have made the greatest proficiency in holiness see most of their own sinfulness.

III. This subject teaches us, not to be forward to censure others as no Christians because of great imperfections, and many things which are unbecoming and disagreeable; for the best of Christians are very imperfect and sinful in this state, and, in many things, all offend. There too often appears in persons a *censorious spirit* towards their fellow-Christians, which is a greater evidence of the want of real religion than those things for which they censure others as no Christians.

IV. Let none improve this doctrine as an encouragement to sloth and sin, and a discouragement to watchfulness against sin, and exertions and strivings after greater degrees of holiness. They who are disposed to make this improvement of the imperfections and sinfulness of all Christians, and indulge themselves in it, have no reason to think themselves to be Christians; for this is directly contrary to the spirit of a Christian. If it be rightly improved, it will be a motive to press forward, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Section IX.

Death. A separate State. The general Resurrection and Judgment. The eternal State of Happiness or Misery.

DEATH.

I. When man had sinned, and God had opened to him a new constitution for the redemption of some of the human race, by a Savior, by saying to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," (Gen. iii. 15;) he said to Adam, and in him to all mankind, that under this new constitution, and from this new state of probation, he should pass into another state and go into the invisible world, by a separation between soul and body; and his body should turn to dust, from whence it was taken. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This sentence must refer to his body only; for this only was dust, and taken out of the ground. His spirit or soul was immaterial, and not dust, or taken out of the ground, but a distinct existence from the body, by which he bore the image of God. "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (Gen. i. 26; ii. 7.) Therefore, Solomon describes what is contained in this sentence in the following words: "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." (Ec. xii. 7.) The death of the body does not imply the death of the soul, but the latter exists when the former is turned to dust. This is declared by our Savior. "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. x. 28.)

This separation between soul and body, by which the latter is dissolved and turned to dust, was not included in the threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" for had there been no redemption, mankind must have been miserable in soul and body forever; which death, all they who are not redeemed will suffer, when the work of redemption is finished, which is called the *second death*, with reference to the body's turning to dust, which is called death, and is the *first death*. Man is, indeed, considered as a fallen creature, a sinner, when he is doomed to this first death, and also as in a new state of probation; and it is wisely ordered as subserving

the design of redemption. It is proper and important that the future state should be invisible to sense, which it would not be if all men passed into it with their bodies, or without dying. But when the body dies, and turns to dust, all that is visible and discerned by our senses is left behind, and the invisible part of man departs into another state *insensibly;* and thus the future state is kept invisible, as the object of faith, not of sight. And this tends more sensibly to keep in view the fallen, sinful state of man, while all are doomed to death, which could not take place had man been innocent; and it tends to humble man in his own eyes, since his body is soon to turn to dust, and to make him feel his wretchedness, if he have no security of existence and happiness in a future state, and to excite an attention to Christ and the gospel, which brings life and immortality to light, and a future resurrection of the body, formed every way perfect, beautiful, and glorious, never to die again.

The only time of probation allotted to man is that of this life, to which the death of the body puts an end; so that every one will be happy or miserable in the future, endless state, according to his character, which is formed before the soul is separated from the body. This is plain and certain from the Scripture, where there is not a word, or the least hint, of another state of trial, after the death of the body, but much is there said to the contrary of this. This life is represented as the sowing, or seed time, and that men shall reap in a future state according to what they do in this life. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) This life is represented as the only time to lay up a treasure in heaven, — to make to ourselves friends, so as to be received into everlasting habitations, when we fail here, when this life ends; — to make our peace with God, which Christ represents and urges, by agreeing with our adversary while we are in the way with him, otherwise we shall be cast into prison, from whence there is no deliverance. And he represents Lazarus and the rich man as *fixed*, — the former in a state of happiness, and the latter in a state of misery, — immediately upon their going out of this world. And it is said, "It is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) And if nothing were said, relating to this point, but the following words, it is fixed in them, beyond a doubt: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive *the things done in his body*, according to that he hath

done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) If, at the final judgment, when the endless state of men will be fixed, they shall be judged according to what they have done in the body, then this life is the only time of probation, and in the body they fix their character and state for eternity.

The time of man's death, and the way and means by which the soul shall be separated from the body, are all hidden from man. He is exposed to death as soon as he begins to exist in the body, and knows not how soon it may come; and no circumstances, nor any thing he can do, or that others can do for him, can secure him from death a moment. This is wisely ordered so, and answers many good ends, which it is needless particularly to mention here.

Death is not a calamity, but a great benefit, to the redeemed. It has no sting for them, but comes to them as a friend, by which they are delivered from all moral and natural evil, and become perfectly holy, and enter upon a life unspeakably better than to live here in the body. Therefore, the apostle Paul had a desire to depart, — to die, and be with Christ, — *which was far better;* and he considered the death of his body as his great gain. (Phil. i. 21, 28.) "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;" (Ps. cxvi. 15;) — which denotes that it is an important and desirable change, by which he is glorified, and their good is promoted. Christ has taken away the sting of death to them, and gives them the victory over it, which he will complete at the general resurrection. In the prospect of this, Christians may now say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55–57.)

Death is justly terrible, and a dreadful evil, to those who are in their sins. It deprives them of all good; it puts an end to their probation state, and to all hope, and fixes them in a state of sin, despair, and endless misery. This is necessarily implied in the words just cited: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." Death could have no sting, by sin or the law, more than any other change or event in life, if it did not fix the curse of the law upon the sinner, when he dies, and put an end to his probation and hope. The sting of death is the evil which sin deserves, and which the law denounces, which is the second death. The death of the body fixes this sting in the sinner's heart, which is endless destruction.

A SEPARATE STATE.

II. That the soul does not die with the body, but exists in a separate state till the general resurrection of all the bodies of men which have died, has been supposed in what has been said on the death of the body, and is asserted, or implied, in several passages of Scripture which have been mentioned under the foregoing head. But this requires a distinct and more particular consideration. And that the soul or spirit of man does not die, or go into a state of insensibility, when the body is turned to dust, is made evident and certain by many other passages of Scripture, which have not been yet mentioned. The promise of Christ to the penitent, believing thief on the cross proves that the death of his body did not put an end to his existence, or sensibility. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) The word "paradise" was used by the Jews, at that day, for heaven, or a state of happiness. The soul of this man was not injured by the death of his body, but he existed in a state of greater sensibility and enjoyment than when united with the body, and went directly to heaven; nor is there the least evidence that this is not equally true of every believer when his body dies. Stephen, the first martyr, expected and prayed for this when his body was dying. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" (Acts vii. 59.) And none can doubt that the Redeemer was as ready to grant his petition as that of the thief.

The apostle Paul expected the same, and speaks of it as certain, that, when his body died and he should be no longer in this world, he should be in heaven with Christ. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. i. 21, 23.) He did not consider himself as dying with the body; but when that died, and he left this world, he expected to depart, and be with Christ in heaven. And he could not mean his being with Christ after the resurrection, for he puts his continuing in the body, and abiding longer in this world, in opposition to his being with Christ; which could not be true on that supposition, for he would be with Christ as soon, though he should live a hundred years longer in the body, as if he died immediately. And he would gain nothing, in this respect, by dying, and, therefore, it could not be *far better* than to live longer in the body. And he expresses the same sentiment, with regard to others as well as

himself, in the following words: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Therefore, we are always confident (or courageous) knowing that while we are at home (or sojourn) in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, (courageous,) I say, and willing rather *to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*" (2 Cor. v. 1, 6, 8.) Here he considers being present with the Lord, or being with Christ, as taking place in consequence of death, or being absent from the body; so that when separated from the body, they shall be with Christ, in a sense and degree which cannot take place while in the body; and these two states are opposed to each other. And he says they *knew* that when they should die, or their bodies be dissolved, they should be in heaven.

This same apostle supposes he could exist, perceive, think, and enjoy to a high degree, when out of his body, or absent from it, when he speaks of the visions and revelations which he had when carried to heaven, and says he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of it, and separate from it. For if the soul could not exist, perceive, and enjoy, when separate from the body, he could have known that he was not out of the body, but in it, when he had those revelations, perceptions, and exercises. (2 Cor. xii. 1–3.) And he speaks of "the spirits of just men made perfect," as being then in heaven with the holy angels, and with Jesus Christ; by which he expressly asserts a separate state, and that the spirits of the just, when the body dies, are made perfect in holiness, and go to heaven, to be with Christ and the happy inhabitants of the invisible world. (Heb. xii. 22–24.) The souls of the martyrs are represented as existing in a state of sensibility, happiness, and honor, in a separate state, after their bodies had been slain. (Rev. vi. 9–11.) And the dead, who die in Christ, are declared to be blessed, and to be received to a state of happiness and rewards. (Chap. xiv. 13.) The apostle Peter speaks of the spirits of those who perished by the flood, as existing when he wrote, and being in prison. (2 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) And Christ proves to the Sadducees, that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had an existence, and were not dead, long after they had left this world and their bodies were turned to dust. (Matt. xxii. 31, 32.)

These passages of Scripture, it is presumed, are sufficient to convince every honest, unprejudiced mind that the soul exists separate from the body in the invisible world, from the death of the body till the general resurrection, notwithstanding the attempts which have been made by those who deny a separate

state, to put a meaning on them so as to make them consistent with such denial.

And the account which the Scripture gives of this matter is very agreeable to reason, and all the appearances relating to it. It is very unreasonable to suppose that the Redeemer, who by his power and grace has made them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, or the holy inhabitants in heaven, should so order it, that death should put an end to their existence till their bodies are raised to life, so as to have no perception, exercise, or enjoyment, during that interval of time, and deprive them of all that holiness and happiness which they might enjoy during that time with him in his kingdom; especially since, by becoming his friends in this world, they are formed to the greatest aversion to falling into such a state, and have strong and unconquerable desires to live and be with Christ, and in the company of his friends and servants in the invisible world. For all true Christians have the same desires which Stephen expressed when dying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and which the apostle Paul said he had: "For I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." And this would not be agreeable to the tender love which he expressed to his disciples and friends when on earth. He said to them, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be." (Chap. xii. 26.) When he says, "Let him follow me," he has reference to the death of the body, which appears from the context; *q. d.*, Let him follow me through death, as I am to die, and then he shall be with me in heaven: agreeable to his prayer for his friends, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." How inconsistent is this with his excluding them from heaven thousands of years from the death of their bodies to the general resurrection, when he is able to introduce them there to be with him as soon as the body dies!

While the soul is in the body, by virtue of a union which God has constituted, it is dependent on that, in a measure, for its perceptions and sensible exercises, and is affected with the disorders of it, in such a manner as to be an argument with some, that the soul is not capable of perception and reason except it be in union with a proper organized body, and, therefore, must die with the body, and cannot exist in a sepa-

rate state. But this fact and appearance is not a sufficient ground for such a consequence. It is proper and wise that the body should have such an influence and effect on the mind, while in this state, and one is so closely united with the other. And God, who has ordered this, when the ends of this constitution are answered, can as easily cause the soul to exist, perceive, reason, and act separate from the body, as now he does in union with the body, and make it to act in a more perfect manner, and have more clear and extensive views and higher enjoyments. There is nothing contrary to reason and experience in this.

When the souls of the redeemed leave the body, they are delivered from all sinful imperfection and made perfectly holy, and find themselves with Jesus Christ, and in the company of the holy inhabitants of heaven. This is a very great change indeed; but not too great to be effected by him who has all power in heaven and earth, and is therefore *omnipotent*, and is infinitely wise. We are ignorant of the particular manner in which the spirits of the just perceive and act in a separate state, or how and by what means they have intercourse with other spirits, by receiving and mutually communicating ideas and sentiments; but this does not afford the least argument that there can be no such thing, and that it does not take place in much higher perfection and to greater advantage than any thing we know of the kind in this state. The illiterate barbarian has no conception of the manner and convenience, or even the possibility of persons exchanging ideas and conversing by letters. He may as reasonably infer from this, that there can be no such thing, as we can that separate spirits do not perceive, converse, act, and enjoy, in a much more perfect manner than we do, because we cannot tell how and in what way this can be done.

When the spirits of the just are separated from the body, the world, which to us is invisible, opens to their view. They find themselves unconfined, surrounded with the most pleasing objects and the best company, enjoying the serene, bright light of heavenly day, where there is no darkness, no sin, or sorrow. They are set at liberty, to range without restraint in the regions of bliss, while their views, exercises, and enjoyments are high, and increased to a degree far beyond our conception. They are, in this respect, like a bird liberated from a cage, in which it has been long confined, and now flies and sports unconfined in the open light and air; or like one who has been long shut up in a dark, uncomfortable prison, and is now set at liberty, enjoys the pleasing light of day, is surrounded by his friends, and has all the enjoyments and comforts of life.

And by going to heaven, they do not get out of the sight and knowledge of this world, and the important affairs which Jesus Christ is carrying on here. We are told in divine revelation, that the angels of heaven are all attention to the things which concern the work of redemption; and that they are all actively engaged in promoting this design among men, and ministering to them who shall be heirs of salvation. And that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. There must, therefore, be in heaven, where the spirits of the just are, with the angels, a very particular knowledge of the events which take place in this world, and a much more clear and certain knowledge of the state of the church of Christ, and the conversion of sinners, than any have while in the body. The spirits of departed saints have the interest of Christ and his church in this world as much at heart as they had when in the body, and much more; and, therefore, must be greatly attentive to it, and know all the events which are in favor of it. They do not go into some dark corner of the universe, out of sight of heaven, of Christ, his church, and this world; but when they leave the body, they rise into light, and take a station in which they are under advantages to see all these things and all worlds, being all attention to them, and having a perfect discerning without the least cloud or darkness; seeing and enjoying the glory of the Redeemer, and the prosperity and success of the work of redemption among men. And their happiness must increase as the cause of Christ advances on earth and the power and kingdom of Satan sinks and is destroyed, and as the powers of their minds and their knowledge are enlarged.

They are delivered from all sin and pain upon passing into the invisible world, and are, therefore, perfectly happy; but at the day of judgment, when they shall be reunited to their bodies, fitted for a heavenly state, their happiness will be increased, which, therefore, they are expecting with desire and joy.

The spirits of those who die in their sins pass into a state of darkness, despair, and tormenting wickedness; and all hope, comfort, and enjoyment being taken from them, they must be totally lost and overwhelmed in misery; yet looking forward to a resurrection and judgment to come with aversion and dread, as involving a great increase of their sufferings, which can have no end. These are the *spirits in prison*, of which the apostle Peter speaks, who are reserved to the general judgment, when each one shall receive according to what he has done in the body.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

III. The general resurrection will put an end to the separate state, when the bodies of all who shall have died from the beginning of the world, to that time, will be raised and come forth, in union with the souls which had been separated from them by death. This will take place when Jesus Christ shall come to judgment. This is frequently spoken of in the Scriptures, and expressly asserted in more places than it is needful to mention here, for those who read the Bible. Our Savior says, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.) When the apostle John had a vision of the general judgment, the general resurrection is connected with it. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12, 13.) The apostle Paul treats particularly of the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed as an important and essential doctrine of Christianity. (1 Cor. xv.)

We depend entirely upon divine revelation for the notice and knowledge of this doctrine of a future resurrection, as it could not be known by any other means. But when we find it revealed, it does not appear contrary to reason, but is agreeable to the dictates of it, and in no respect incredible, if the account the Scripture gives of it be properly considered and understood. There were, indeed, some professing Christians in the apostles' days, as there have been since, who denied this doctrine. This was the occasion of St. Paul's writing so particularly and lengthy upon it, in the chapter just now quoted. This doctrine was thought incredible, impossible, and ridiculous, by the heathen philosophers and others, in the days of Christ and his apostles. And this same incredulity has been transmitted down to this day, among those who pay little or no regard to the Bible. They say, it is impossible that all the same bodies which have died should be ever recovered and raised again. It is not thought necessary to state their objections, and answer them here, as this has been done over and over again, by many able writers. It will be sufficient to observe, that the remark which Christ made upon the Sadducees, who denied this doctrine as impossible, is applicable to them, viz., that they do greatly err, because they do not believe or under-

stand the Scriptures, nor the power of God. When they can tell in what *identity* consists, and what is necessary in order to constitute the resurrection body the *same* with that to which the soul was united in this life, and what omnipotence and infinite knowledge and wisdom can do, and cannot do, with respect to this, and can prove that the Bible is not a revelation from God, then let them undertake to prove that the doctrine of a general resurrection of the same bodies which have died, or shall die, to the end of the world, is impossible or incredible.

The resurrection bodies of the redeemed will be beautiful and glorious, far beyond our present conception; — they will be, like the glorified body of the Redeemer, every way fitted for a state of immortality, constant activity, and perfect happiness, as the eternal monuments of the power, wisdom, and goodness of Christ. They will have no defect, but be perfectly suited to accommodate and furnish the holy soul to all that activity, work, and enjoyment, which are implied in a state of perfect happiness. This is called, in Scripture, a *spiritual body*, which some have thought to be a contradiction. It is, indeed, beyond our comprehension. But where is the inconsistency or impropriety in calling that a spiritual body which is so much unlike any body which we know, or of which we can have any adequate idea, that it is perfectly suited to promote the perceptions, activity, and enjoyment of a holy mind, and answer every desirable end, with respect to all external objects?

The bodies of those who died in their sins will be an awful contrast to those of the redeemed. They will rise "to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. xii. 2.) They will be every way suited to the souls which are wholly sinful, and enemies to God, prepared for condemnation, despair, and endless destruction.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

IV. That there will be a general judgment, when all moral agents, angels, and men, good and bad, shall give an account of themselves, of their moral character and conduct, to God, their Judge, and receive of him, and be treated by him, according to what they are, and as their moral conduct has been, while in a state of trial, is expressly and abundantly asserted in the Scriptures. And this appears reasonable, desirable, and important, to all who have any proper conceptions of moral government, and are friends to it.

The precise time when the day of judgment shall commence is fixed, and Jesus Christ the Redeemer is appointed

to be the Judge of all. This he commanded the apostles to publish, in preaching his gospel to the world, as Peter declares. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." (Acts x. 42.) The apostle Paul, therefore, kept this in view in his preaching and letters. In his discourse to the assembly at Athens he introduces this as an important article: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31, 39.) And when he spoke before Felix concerning the faith in Christ, "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and *a judgment to come*." (Acts xxiv. 25.) And he often brought this into view in his letters. He says, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv. 10–12.) "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (1 Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 10.) "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom." (2 Tim. iv. 1.)

Jesus Christ is the appointed Judge. This appears wise and desirable, that he who is God manifest in the flesh, and by this medium and in this sense the visible God, should take this high and infinitely important and honorable station, and decide the character and eternal state of all moral agents, especially of man. This will be a bright and glorious manifestation of Deity in the human nature, when he shall come in the glory of the Father, with all the signals of divinity, attended with all the holy angels, and shall raise the bodies of all the dead, and summon all before him as their final Judge, taking upon him an office and business infinitely too high and great for a mere creature. This will strike conviction into the mind of every intelligent creature, that he is really God and man. And it is highly proper and important that he who stooped so low, and took upon him the form of a servant, and submitted to reproach and contempt, and to die an ignominious and cruel death by the hands of wicked men, for the sal-

vation of sinners, should be thus rewarded and honored, and every knee be made to bow to him, as God and their final Judge. (Phil ii. 8–11.) Nothing could be more pleasing, and give greater joy and happiness to the redeemed and the holy angels, than to have the Redeemer thus exalted and honored as the Judge of all, and nothing more disagreeable and confounding to devils and wicked men.

The place in which the general judgment will be attended will be such as shall be in the best manner suited to such a transaction, — to accommodate the Judge, and all concerned in the business of that important, solemn day. It will be so contrived and situated, that every one of the vast assembly which shall then be collected will be under advantage to see the Judge and all that is done, and hear every word that shall be spoken by the Judge, or by any one else, through the whole process. The apostle Paul says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) It hence appears that this scene will not be on this earth, but in some more convenient place, which shall be fixed and formed for that purpose, which Christ, by whom all worlds were made, can effect at once with infinite ease. It is not certain, from the apostle's mentioning clouds and the air, that it will be in the atmosphere of this earth: for if this be meant by the air here, which is not certain, though the redeemed shall meet Christ in our atmosphere, this may be that they may accompany him to some other more distant place where the judgment shall be, and to which all intelligent creatures in the universe will be brought.

The design of the general judgment is not to inform the Judge, that he may know the character and actions of all, so as to be able to pronounce a proper and righteous sentence upon them, for he is omniscient; but it is to make known to creatures upon what grounds he proceeds in giving rewards and inflicting punishment, that all may be under the best advantage to see and approve the righteousness and propriety of the final sentence. Therefore, in the Scripture it is called "the day of *the revelation of the righteous judgment* of God." (Rom. ii. 5.) In order to this, the moral character of every one will be laid open, and set in a true and clear light, so that all the spectators shall be under the best advantage to see it. Every single person must be called forth, and take his turn to be scrutinized; and all he has done, whether secretly or more

openly, will be made manifest to all creatures, while all attend to every particular, for there will not be one inattentive spectator there. All disguise and hypocrisy will be detected, and every exercise of heart and outward action, with the motive and design, will be made to appear in a true light. In this the Scripture is very express: "For God will bring *every work* into judgment, with *every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ec. xii. 14.) "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops. I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matt. xii. 36. Luke xii. 2, 3.) "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts." (Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 5.) "So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv. 12.) "And they were judged *every man* according to his works." (Rev. xx. 13.)

It hence appears that the day of judgment will not be finished in the space of a natural day of twenty-four hours, but the process may continue and go on during the term of many thousand years, — much longer than from the creation to the commencement of that day. Though days, and years, and time as we now measure it, will then be at an end, yet there will be a succession of events, and of ideas and perceptions, among creatures; and this must continue without end. And it must take time, as we now term it and conceive of it, for creatures to recollect and take a particular view of every character that has existed, — of all that has been done, secretly or openly, by every particular person, of angels, devils, and men, from the beginning of the world to that time, — even though the exhibition shall be made in the best and most advantageous manner, and creatures shall be able to think and receive ideas with much greater celerity than men can in this state. Solomon seems to have reference to this long duration of the day of judgment in the following words: "I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." (Ec. iii. 17.) That is, however long a term it may take to bring every purpose and every work of men into view, so as to judge them according to their works, yet time will not be wanting, and God will take time enough for it.

In this transaction, it may be supposed the Redeemer will give, or cause to be exhibited, the best, most perfect, and entertaining history of mankind and of all intelligences, without the least error or misrepresentation, including all the thoughts, exercises, and actions of moral agents, all their motives and designs in external conduct, with respect to God and creatures, all their enjoyments and sufferings, and every event which relates to them, including the designs, agency, and conduct of God, with respect to them, and the ends answered thereby; by which one connected, important scene will rise into view, and be seen from the beginning to the end, comprehending all the sins and all the virtue and holiness that have taken place among creatures, together with the superintending hand of God in every thing; his decrees and designs, his universal energy and governing providence, wisely conducting every thing and all events, to bring them to their intended issue;— by which his power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, truth, and faithfulness shall be set in the clearest light. And as the scene proceeds, in this divine exhibition and history which the Redeemer will give, all his friends will be entertained and gratified in a very high degree, and their enjoyment and happiness will rise and be on the increase from the beginning to the end, however long it shall continue.

On the other hand, it will be a most distressing and dreadful scene to the enemies of Christ, both devils and wicked men, and their pain and torment will increase from the beginning, till the infinitely dreadful sentence is passed upon them, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And while they hear the blessed sentence pronounced, inviting the righteous into the eternal kingdom of God, and see them received there, this will increase their misery and torment to an unspeakable degree, which never can be abated. At the same time, the enjoyment and happiness of the blessed will rise to an inconceivable height, which will continue and increase without end.

The redeemed will not be publicly justified and received to eternal life, because of their obedience to the law of God; for, if treated according to that, they would be found guilty, and must be cursed. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them, and they will be judged according to the gospel, as friends to Christ, and believers in him; since God can be just, and yet publicly justify every one who is publicly known to be a believer in Christ. And when it is said, that every one shall be judged, and shall receive according to his works which he has done in the body in this life, the gospel is supposed and kept in view; and every one who shall, by set-

ting the whole of his character and works in clear and public sight, appear to be a friend to Christ, and united to him, shall, on this account and according to the gospel, be publicly justified and rewarded with eternal life, which he could not be, if treated according to the law of works. And they who shall be found not to be friends to Christ while in this world, shall be condemned, and fall under the curse of the law. This is agreeably to the representation which Christ gives of the general judgment. (Matt. xxv. 31, etc.) And the apostle Paul sets it in the same light. (2 Thess. i. 7–10.)

It has been a question, whether the sins of the redeemed would be brought into view and laid open before all intelligences at the day of judgment, or would be covered and kept out of sight, and different opinions have been entertained of this. But it is thought, if the matter be properly considered, it will be evident that all their sins will be brought into view and laid open before all, and that it will appear that there is not any evidence from the Scripture that their sins will be concealed, but the contrary. It is indeed said in Scripture, that the sins of the people of God shall be *blotted out*, *covered*, *cast into the depths of the sea*, and *remembered no more*. (Is. xliii. 25. Ps. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxxi. 34. Mich. vii. 19.) But these are metaphorical expressions, to denote the free and full pardon of all their sins, so that they should never be remembered against them so as to condemn them to suffer the just consequence of them; but they shall be treated as well as if they never had been guilty of one sin. It cannot be true, that God will remember their sins no more, in any other sense, for it is impossible he should forget them, or any thing else. This has been already observed in the section on justification.

1. That the sins of the redeemed should not be brought into view at the day of judgment, appears contrary to the express declaration of Scripture which has been mentioned. It is said, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Which cannot be consistent with passing over and concealing all the sins of the redeemed.

2. It appears impossible that their sins should be concealed, consistent with the sins of the wicked being fully laid open; for believers and unbelievers are so many ways connected, that the thoughts and conduct of the latter cannot be fully discovered without making known the sins of the former, at least in many instances; of which every one must be sensible, who attends to the matter. For instance, is it not impossible that all the sins of an unbelieving husband should be clearly discovered in all their circumstances and aggravations, while all

the sins of his believing wife are wholly concealed; which were the occasion of many of his sins, and to which they have a particular reference?

3. The holy exercises and good works of the saved cannot be set in a true and just light, without discovering their sinful infirmities and defects at least with which they have all been attended, and their sins have been the occasion and reason of their gracious exercises in many instances. How can their repentance of their sins be discovered and clearly seen, while the sins of which they repent are wholly concealed? How can their humility, and their humbling themselves in the sight of the Lord be discovered, unless the sins for which they humble themselves be known? How shall their love and faithfulness in reproving a believing brother for his sins, and their labors and prayers for him, which have been the means of his recovery, reformation, and salvation, be made known, without discovering the sins of that brother? And how can their trust in Christ for the pardon of their sins, and their penitent confessions of their sins, be discovered, without, at the same time, discovering their sins, to which these exercises have reference, and without which they would not be virtuous, or reasonable, or even intelligible? In short, all the holy exercises and works of a Christian, take their particular complexion and peculiat beauty from their sins, of which they were guilty before conversion and afterwards, which cannot be seen any farther than their sins come into view.

4. Many sins of the redeemed have been already published to the world in divine revelation, and will be known by all who read the Bible to the end of the world, and at the day of judgment; and will forever be known and remembered by all the redeemed, by all the angels and devils, and by many, if not by all, wicked men. The reader will recollect many more instances of this than Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Peter, and the rest of the apostles. And the apostle Paul took pains to keep in view and publish his great wickedness before his conversion. God has ordered all these to be published; and, therefore, we know it is wise and best that they should not be concealed, but made known; and that this will answer some important good end. And who can say, that God will not publish all the sins of every one of the redeemed at the day of judgment, and that this will not be necessary to answer some important ends? This leads to another particular.

5. It seems necessary that the sins of the saved should be known and published, in order to discover and set in the most clear light the goodness and grace of God in pardoning and

saving them, and that their need of a Redeemer and the efficacy of his atonement and righteousness should be seen to the greatest advantage. And the work of the Holy Spirit, in his effectually applying redemption to them and subduing such rebels, cannot be otherwise fully revealed in every particular instance. Of this every one must be sensible, who will reflect on the subject. There is, doubtless, something peculiar in the character of each one of the redeemed with respect to his guilt, the circumstances and aggravations of his sins, and the manner in which he is brought to repentance, etc., which serves to illustrate the sovereign grace of God in his pardon and redemption; and it is so ordered that he should sin in just such a manner and degree, and in such particular circumstances, to answer some end; and particularly this, that God might be more glorified in the exercise of his sovereign, wise, wonderful goodness and grace, in his pardon and salvation. But in order to this, the particular sins, the guilt, and circumstances in which he sinned, must be known; and must be known to all, in order to the greatest and most public display of sovereign grace, in his pardon and salvation, that all may glorify God, and give thanks, and praise him on his behalf. This leads to another observation.

6. Every one of the redeemed ardently desires that God may have all the praise and glory of his pardoning mercy and sovereign grace exercised towards him, in his pardon and salvation; and the more this is known and celebrated, the more pleased he will be. But this cannot be known, it cannot be seen what God has done for *him* in particular, any farther than his sins, with their circumstances and particular aggravations, are published and known. Therefore, it will be so far from being undesirable to him, or giving him the least uneasiness, to have his sins, with all their aggravations, most particularly and clearly laid open before all, that they may see his guilt and the odiousness of his character as he does; that it will give him a peculiar satisfaction and high degree of pleasure, as it will promote the happiness of all his friends, and be matter of their gratitude and praise to God for his sovereign grace, exercised and manifested in his pardoning and saving such a sinner; and God will have all the praise and glory.

Where is there a real Christian now, who, when he reflects on his amazing guilt and vileness, the multitude and aggravations of his sins, his desert, and danger of perishing forever, which have been prevented purely by the sovereign grace of God, exercised in all wisdom and prudence towards him, in pardoning, rescuing, and saving him, who does not say, at least in his heart, "Let God have all the praise and glory of

his rich and sovereign grace, exercised towards me, in pardoning *such a sinner*, so infinitely guilty and vile, attended with such particular aggravations. Let all heaven, the angels, and all the redeemed know what God has done for me, and praise him forever." In this view, he desires and wishes that his case might be particularly and fully known to all, that they all might join with him in giving praise and glory to God. And at the day of judgment, this disposition and desire will be stronger and perfect; and he will, by having all his sins set in order, and in the clearest light before him and all creatures, have a more clear and enlarged view himself of the multitude and greatness of his sins than he ever had before, and of the wonderful mercy of God in pardoning him, and of the boundless sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, and of his merit, by which he has obtained forgiveness of all his sins, and complete salvation. This will prepare him to be highly gratified, and exceedingly rejoice that the whole is now brought out and made known to all the friends of God, that they may all be under the best advantage to join with him in giving all the praise and glory to God and the Savior, of his unbounded love and sovereign grace, in which he hath abounded towards him, in all wisdom and prudence. In this view, he cannot desire to have one of his sins concealed for which Christ has atoned, and which is pardoned, and would not have his sins in general secreted, on any consideration.

In a word, Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of sinners; he came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. This is his work, and in this is his glory: that the redeemed are sinners, must, therefore, be known at the day of judgment, in order to his having the glory of their salvation. And the more clearly their true character is seen, and their sins, in their number and aggravations, are discovered, the more will Christ be glorified in their salvation. Therefore, the brightest possible discovery will be made of this by him, at the day of judgment. And by this the redeemed will be gratified and pleased to a high degree. It will appear at that day, that the redeemed are not saved because they deserve such favor, or are less unworthy, or less sinners than others; but because Christ loved them, and gave himself for them, and they are united to him, and have put their trust in him for pardon, righteousness, and complete redemption. And though they may then appear to have been greater sinners, and more ill deserving than those who perish, — as, doubtless, many if not all of them will, — and their greatest crimes will appear to be those which they committed after their conversion, yet this will not hinder their justification and salvation, or render it in the least degree improper,

more than if they were less sinners; but the Redeemer will be hereby more glorified in the salvation of *such sinners*, and they will be the more happy. For they to whom most is forgiven, will love the most.

Though the Redeemer has not altered the nature of sin, or rendered it less odious and criminal, either in the redeemed, or in those who perish, but much more so; yet he overrules it, and turns it to his own glory, and the glory of his kingdom, and makes the sins of those who are saved the occasion of their greater holiness and happiness forever.

When every character of those who are to be judged shall be set in the clearest light, and fixed, and all the past conduct and transactions in the moral world, both of God and creatures, shall be set in a clear, connected view, and all creatures shall be under the best advantage to see the righteousness and propriety of the final sentence, it will be pronounced by the Judge in the sight and audience of all. This will be, in some respects, the most solemn, weighty, joyful, and dreadful scene and transaction that had ever taken place; which will fix the righteous in a state of endless, inexpressible happiness and glory, and send the wicked away into inconceivable, eternal misery. We have a summary of this sentence on each of these left on record, for our instruction and warning, by the Judge himself, in his awful representation of the day of judgment, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.

THE ETERNAL STATE OF HAPPINESS OR MISERY.

V. The general judgment issues in an endless state of happiness or misery, as has been just observed. Much is said of this endless state, both of the happiness and misery of it, in the Scriptures, in the promises, and threatenings, and declarations there made. But those opposite states, both of happiness and misery, are more particularly described in the revelation of Jesus Christ, made to the apostle John, for the support and encouragement of Christians, and to excite them to faith, resolution, patience, and perseverance in the service of Christ, and a faithful, constant adherence to the truths of the gospel, in the evil times which were to take place, and the opposition and sufferings to which they are exposed in this world, and the trials and temptations which await them here.

But with all the instruction we have on this subject, and the utmost attention to it of which we are capable, our conceptions are dark and low, and fall unspeakably short of a full, comprehensive view of the truth. However, the

following thoughts will be suggested, as agreeable to the Scripture: —

First. The righteous will go from the judgment into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, where they shall enjoy everlasting life, in a state of unspeakable happiness and glory.

Their bodies will be beautiful and glorious, like the body of the glorified Jesus, active and sprightly, without the least possible weariness or decay, by the greatest, uninterrupted activity, every way suited to the employment of such a place and state, which shall in no degree confine or impede the mind in its exercises and enjoyment, but shall greatly assist and promote these; so that the soul will be invigorated by its union to such a body, and be more happy forever than it could be in any other situation and circumstances whatever.

There is an external place and city, or kingdom, formed in the greatest beauty, convenience, and glory, suited to be a dwelling for the incarnate Son of God, and the embodied spirits of the redeemed; where every one will be perfectly accommodated and pleased, every circumstance being answerable to his desires and suited to his employment, and to render him most happy. Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 2.) Though this house and kingdom were made when the world was created, yet it may be capable of alterations and additions, to increase the convenience, beauty, and glory of it. When Christ ascended to heaven in his glorified body, it may be supposed the place was, in a degree, fitted up, and better suited for the reception and residence of the Redeemer, in his glorified body. And after the day of judgment, there will probably be a still further addition to the beauty and glory of this place, and new accommodations be formed for the embodied church of the redeemed; so that the place, which was always glorious, will then exceed in glory.

The redeemed, thus situated, furnished, and surrounded with every thing convenient and desirable, there being nothing, nor any circumstance, which will not be suited to give them pleasure, and furnish them in the best manner for their employment, will be perfectly holy. Every thought, and all their exercises and conduct, will be perfectly right, and with the greatest propriety. They will, by their holy, ardent love, be united to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a strong, most happy, and everlasting union. They will behold this God in a full blaze of light. In his light they shall see light, and all moral darkness shall be excluded forever. God and the Lamb shall be the eternal, undiminishing light of that holy city. They

shall see his glory without a veil, and enjoy all his beauty and perfection, to the utmost of their capacity, with the greatest assurance that this God is their God, and will be their friend forever. "The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters." (Rev. vii. 17.) He will be the great and eternal medium of communications from the Deity, and discoveries of his love, perfection, and glory, and of their access to God, and enjoyment of him. Their peculiar and close union and conformity to him will be the eternal source of a high degree of honor and happiness, which no other creatures can enjoy. They shall sit down with him on his throne, and share with him in all his honor and happiness, to the utmost of their capacity. And what happiness must they enjoy who love God and the Redeemer with all their hearts, — with the most strong and fervent love of benevolence and complacency, — when they see how greatly he is glorified, and will be forever, by their redemption and salvation! And what joy will they have in praising and giving glory to him! And their infinite obligations to him for redeeming them from sin and hell, and giving them eternal life, will be felt by them, and be the constant, eternal source of the sweetest, most happifying love of gratitude; and in expressing it, they will have the highest pleasure and enjoyment.

They will be most happy in the society which they shall form, of which every individual will be a member. They will be perfectly united by the strongest, most sweet, and everlasting bond of love, and the happiest friendship, mutually enjoying and rejoicing in the happiness of each other, — each one knowing that every one in this great kingdom is perfectly beautiful and amiable, and a cordial friend to him. And there will doubtless be ways of expressing their love and friendship for each other in a better and more agreeable way and manner than we now know, and of which we can now have no conception; by which they will mingle souls with the greatest freedom and intimacy, having no reserve or secret which they cannot with pleasure impart to each other.

And those who have been intimate friends in this world, and mutual blessings to each other, will know one another in heaven, and what has passed between them in this life will be the occasion of peculiar pleasure and joy in each other. This appears reasonable, and may be with certainty inferred, from what the apostle Paul says to those of whose conversion he had been the instrument. He addresses them thus: "As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even

ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." (2 Cor. i. 14. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

If there be such peculiar and high satisfaction and pleasure in Christian love and friendship in this imperfect state, how unspeakable must be the enjoyment and happiness when those friends meet in heaven, — having put off all their imperfection and sin, and become perfectly beautiful and excellent, — formed every way for the highest and everlasting friendship, without any thing to keep them at a distance, or occasion any reserve, but every thing suited to their enjoyment of each other, — in the most exalted, refined friendship, — in the greatest intimacy and union of hearts, — expressing their sentiments and feelings with the utmost freedom and ease, without any danger or possibility of being misunderstood! — at the same time their hearts glowing with love to Christ, in whose presence they are, and who is the author and centre of all the love and friendship in heaven: and the more they love him, the stronger and more sensible is their union of hearts to each other, and the greater happiness they have in their mutual friendship.

The church of the redeemed is the body of Christ, of which he is the head — the fulness of him who filleth all in all. He is the former of this society and kingdom; and, when completed by his hand, it will be as perfect, excellent, and glorious, as infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, united together and exerted, will make it. There will be not one member too many, nor one wanting, in order to make it most complete and perfect. Every one will be fixed in his proper place, and be formed in all respects so as to render the whole the most perfect, beautiful, harmonious, and happy society possible.

The three persons in the Godhead form an infinitely high, holy, and happy society, — the original and perfect pattern of all true love, friendship, and happiness; and the society of the redeemed, the church and kingdom of Christ, will be an eternal imitation and image of the infinitely high and perfect society of the *Three-One*, — the *One in Three*, — and a most beautiful, happy, and glorious emanation from him who necessarily exists infinitely the most beautiful and happy society, without beginning, change, or end, being entirely incomprehensible by creatures. This idea seems to be expressed by Christ, in his prayer to the Father, which will be completely answered in heaven. He prays for the elect in the following words: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. The glory which thou gavest me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me,

that they may be made perfect in one. I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John xvii. 21–23, 26.) And the words of the apostle John, if considered in their full meaning, seem to express the same thing: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 12, 16.) Jesus Christ, the Mediator, is the medium by which the society of the redeemed in heaven will be united to the infinitely more excellent and perfect society, — the eternal Trinity of persons, who dwell in the infinitely high and holy place, far beyond the reach or comprehension of creatures; from whom the same benevolence and social love is shed down through the Mediator on these redeemed ones, forming them into one most happy society, in union with the blessed Trinity, and so as to be a little image of the Deity, — the Three in One, and One in Three.

The holy angels belong to this society and kingdom; but though their natural powers be great, and in this respect they may be superior to man, they will not be in so honorable a station as the redeemed, nor can they enjoy that peculiar happiness which the latter will have in consequence of being redeemed, and sharing in *redeeming love*, and their near, honorable, and happy union to Jesus Christ, by which they are the *bride, the Lamb's wife*. The angels are unspeakably more happy than they could have been, had there been no Redeemer and no redemption of sinners. They are employed and happy in looking into these things, and knowing more of God by this mean, and seeing his manifold wisdom and wonderful goodness. (Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.) They are happy in serving Christ, in carrying on the work of redemption, and in ministering to the redeemed and serving them, and will, doubtless, be so forever. "Are they not ALL ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 12.) Hence it appears that man is more of an ultimate end than the angels. The angels were made for man, and not man for the angels; — for we may know the end of God in making any creature or thing by the use which he makes of it. However, they are a necessary part of this most beautiful, happy, and glorious society and kingdom, and are in a very honorable station in serving Christ and his church.

The happiness of the redeemed in heaven will not consist in rest and indolence, in opposition to activity, but the contrary; in activity, and incessant, unwearying labor and service, from

which they will not cease or rest. They will join in worshipping and praising the UNDIVIDED THREE, — God, and the Lamb, and the Holy Ghost; and the Redeemer will find business and employment for them continually, though we cannot now tell particularly what it will be. Perhaps there will be public teachers, who will assist others in their speculations, and in exciting their love and pious affections. Some will have greater abilities than others, and more existence and holiness, and will be able to assist and instruct them who have less. The apostle Paul says there will be a difference between them, as one star differs from another. (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.) They will converse together with the greatest pleasure, sometimes in larger, and sometimes in smaller companies, and at other times only two together; and doubtless sometimes they will have high enjoyment in conversing with Deity, and with Christ, by themselves alone, in retirement, by meditation and devotion. But with respect to these particulars, we are in the dark, and unable to determine with certainty. It is enough for us to know, at present, that every thing will be ordered and take place in the best manner, for the brightest display of the divine perfections, and the greatest happiness of the members of this kingdom; and that each one will be constantly active in that business which shall be most proper for him, in which he shall take the greatest pleasure, and shall be most for the general good. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." (Rev. vii. 15.)

There will be a perfect, uninterrupted harmony and agreement in this society and kingdom. They will be united, not only in affection, but in sentiment. They will be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Every one will be full of light, according to his capacity and advantages to know, and not one will make any mistake, or judge wrong concerning any matter or thing, throughout endless ages; for this would be morally wrong or sinful. None of them will be omniscient, and some may know more than others; but they will pass no judgment about things of which they have no evidence, and concerning which they have no knowledge, except it be that they do not know, and, therefore, cannot determine. There will, therefore, be no dispute and jar in heaven; but every one will be all attention, and all ear, to learn what he does not yet know, and suspend his judgment in every matter, till he has light to decide it perfectly right.

And there will be nothing to offend them, or give them the least uneasiness or one disagreeable, painful idea, thought, or sensation, to eternity; but every object will excite, or be the occasion of, the most pleasing sensations, and every thought

will be attended with ecstatic delight. All through which they have passed in this world, the scene of sorrow, pain and sin, will not be forgotten; but their reflection upon it, while it is all in the clearest view, will be the occasion of their greatest enjoyment and happiness. The wicked, in a state of suffering and punishment, will not be out of their sight, but will be seen by all the inhabitants of heaven. "They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." (Rev. xiv. 10, 11.) But this will give them no pain, or one uneasy thought or sensation; but it will be the occasion of their joy and praise.

Not that the misery of any, in itself considered, and for its own sake, will give them pleasure; but they will have such a constant sense of the justice, propriety, and necessity of their punishment, to answer the best end, for the glory of God and the general good, that they will, in the full view of this, sing and say, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus; for they are worthy. Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." (Rev. xvi. 5–7.) And this will be the occasion of exciting and maintaining, in a higher degree than otherwise could be, a sense of the happiness of the redeemed, and of the sovereign, distinguishing goodness of God in their salvation, and of their indebtedness to sovereign, divine grace, which will raise their gratitude to the highest key, and will keep in constant view the excellence, worthiness, power, and grace of the Redeemer. This is the representation the Scripture gives. The inhabitants of heaven rejoice and praise God in full view of the punishment of the wicked. "After these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Hallelujah: and her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah." (Rev. xix. 1–4.)

And reason teaches not only *why* the punishment of the wicked will be the occasion of the greater joy and happiness of the redeemed, agreeable to this representation of Scripture, but that it *must be so*, in order to the perfect happiness of the inhabitants of heaven. For if this were not on the whole, all things considered, agreeable to them, it must be matter of uneasiness, and the occasion of constant grief and pain, which

would render heaven, in a great measure, an unhappy place. It is impossible that the wicked should be punished unless God were pleased with it; therefore, so far as the inhabitants of heaven will be like God, and be pleased with that which is pleasing to him, this punishment will be the occasion of joy and happiness to them.

And while they are in the full enjoyment of all this happiness in heaven, they will have the greatest assurance that it shall have no end, but continue forever. Without this, their happiness would not be complete at any time; for whatever happy circumstances they were in at present, and however happy they might be, the thought that they were liable to lose it, and having no assurance that it should never cease, would be a great alloy to their present enjoyment, and be inconsistent with their *complete* happiness. Therefore, the certainty that they shall exist without end in this state, is a necessary ingredient in their felicity, in order to their having fulness of joy at present as well as pleasures forevermore.

From the nature of the human mind, and the circumstances in which the redeemed will be in heaven, it is reasonable to suppose that they will increase and make continual progress in knowledge, holiness, and happiness, without end; and they will make advances in these with greater celerity the longer they exist. The greatest and chief objects of knowledge are infinite; this, therefore, is a foundation for progress in knowledge without end, and however swift the advances be, the subjects to which they attend can never be exhausted. However much they may know, at any supposed time, they will be so far from knowing all that may be known, that the advances in knowledge which they have then made will be little, compared with what may take place, and will put them under advantages to make yet swifter advances in knowledge for time to come. The mind is capable of enlarging its ideas and knowledge by attention and exercise, when objects present and invite to new discoveries, and so far as we can conceive, must enlarge and grow in strength and capacity in these circumstances; and every degree of increase of knowledge will prepare the mind to make yet greater and more swift advances in knowledge, to which no bounds can be set so as to put a stop to the progress. And in proportion to the increase of their knowledge will their love and holiness increase, and consequently their enjoyment and happiness.

The Deity, who is the infinite fountain and source of existence, is almighty, infinitely wise and good, can open new scenes successively, by which the blessed shall know more and more of him, and grow in degrees of holiness and happiness;

and however fast they increase in progress and advances in knowledge, holiness, and happiness, they will forever be infinitely below the Deity, and fall infinitely short of infinite existence, holiness, and felicity. This view may serve, in some measure, to give us an idea of the greatness of the felicity of the redeemed and of the advancing grandeur and glory of the eternal kingdom of Christ, which far exceeds the utmost stretch of our thoughts and imagination.

And this is agreeable to the Scripture, if it be not expressly or implicitly asserted there. The following words of the Redeemer may be considered as expressing, or at least implying, this: "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*." (John x. 10.) These words have been understood to express the greater happiness which the redeemed shall have by Christ, than that which they could have had by the first Adam, had he not sinned. They may be understood to express more, even the abounding and endless increase of eternal life. They shall have it multiplied and abounding with increase forever. It is said of the redeemed in heaven, "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and *shall lead them unto living fountains of waters*." (Rev. vii. 17.) Which may import not only the fulness of happiness and the care of Christ to supply them constantly, but the progress that shall be made in new discoveries of divine truth and grace, and in enjoyment and happiness. They shall be led from one fountain of living water to another, and new ones shall be constantly opening for their greater refreshment and pleasure.

In heaven they will contemplate and search out the works of God, and marvellous things without number, which to us, in this world, are unsearchable. (Job iv. 9.) These great and marvellous works of God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, will be then explored and sought out with the greatest attention and pleasure. (Ps. cxi. 2. Isa. xxviii. 29.) They will search into, and see the divine plan, comprehending all things and all events that have come to pass, formed by infinite wisdom and goodness, and executed by the all-pervading energy of omnipotence; they will behold it with pleasing admiration and wonder, as it has been opened in divine providence, and be more and more pleased with the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God. They will learn his manifold wisdom, in planning and conducting all things to the most happy issue, and understand, with pleasing wonder and adoration, more of his judgments and ways, which in this state are unsearchable, and past finding out. They will see more and more of their own entire, absolute, and universal

dependence on God for all things, and of all creatures and things; that they are the clay, and he is the sovereign potter, and former of all things; and this will appear to them to be just as they would have it, and the greater sense they have of this, the more pleasure and happiness will they have, while they rejoice that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and will reign forever. (Rev. xix. 6.) For God will then be all in all; "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 28.)

Secondly. The wicked will go from the judgment unto everlasting punishment. The Scripture sets this punishment in an awful and terrifying light, not only as it will be endless, but amazingly great and dreadful in degree. It is represented by their being cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where they have no rest, but shall be tormented night and day, without any cessation, forever and ever; — where they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. (Rev. xiv. 10, 11; xx. 10, 15.) If these are to be taken as in some measure metaphorical expressions, yet we must not think that they are designed to represent to our view and imagination the sufferings of the wicked as greater and more dreadful than they really will be; for this is not consistent with the dignity and truth of God, to attempt to fright men, by threatening them with a greater evil than he ever will inflict on any, or by representing them as suffering more than the wicked will suffer. Besides, the wicked will be "vessels fitted to destruction;" which implies that their whole capacity shall be devoted to suffering; but they are capable of suffering as great evil as they can conceive or imagine. All the use which God will have for them is to suffer; this is all the end they can answer; therefore, all their faculties, and their whole capacity, will be employed or used for this end, otherwise they would be useless and answer no end.

As the wicked are to suffer in the body, they will be capable of suffering by means of the body, or of suffering bodily pain, as well as that which is purely mental. The body can, by Omnipotence, be made capable of suffering the greatest imaginable pain, without producing a dissolution, or abating the least degree of life and sensibility. The bodies of the wicked will be raised, and united to their souls, that they may be punished, and suffer misery in body and mind, in union. And God can render a future separation impossible, and so form the body as that it shall continue in full

life, and with quick sense, in union with the soul, in the hottest fire that can be imagined, or exist through endless ages. And since the Scripture speaks of them as tormented in a lake of fire and brimstone, perhaps we have no reason to conclude there will be nothing of this kind, or that the suffering of this kind will not be so great as to equal this representation. The Scripture says, "What if God, willing (or determining) to show his wrath, *and make his power known*, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" (Rom. ix. 22.) And that they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and *from the glory of his power*." (2 Thess. i. 9.) One way in which God will show his power in the punishment of the wicked, will be in strengthening and upholding their bodies and souls, in suffering torments, which otherwise would be intolerable, while, at the same time, his power is gloriously manifested in the manner in which the punishment is to be inflicted.

The apostle Peter, speaking of the day of judgment and the destruction of the wicked, says, "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in stôre, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." By the heavens are generally meant, in Scripture, the sun, moon, and stars. These, with the earth, are reserved against the day of judgment, and for the destruction of ungodly men, by being all set on fire with this earth. "When the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and the earth, also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.) If the heavens, the sun, the moon, and fixed stars, with all the planets that accompany them, together with this earth, should be thrown together with a tremendous crash and noise, so as to make one common mass of liquid fire, and the wicked be cast into it at the day of judgment, to remain there forever in this unquenchable fire, it would be agreeable to this description of it by Peter, and other passages of Scripture. And perhaps this is the most natural construction of the words now cited. This would be a great and amazing display of omnipotence, and represents the punishment of the wicked, by their bodies, as very dreadful; but not greater than they will deserve, or than God can inflict, and make them strong to bear.

But be this as it may, and in whatever way or degree the wicked will suffer pain by the body, it is not to be doubted that their mental pain and sufferings will be the chief part of their punishment. Indeed, such a situation and torture of

their bodies as has been now mentioned, is suited to fill their minds with an amazing sense of the awful power, and dreadful anger of God, which must occasion inexpressible mental terror, anguish, and torture. A great part of the punishment of the wicked will consist in a sense of the greatness, power, and terrible majesty of Jehovah, and his wrath and displeasure with them, manifested in their proper effects. This will fill their minds with exeruciating pain, and horror inexpressible, while the tokens of all these are exhibited in the most dreadful manner to them, in their punishment.

But there are other circumstances and things which will be dreadful ingredients in the cup of their punishment. Their own disposition and exercises of heart, their selfishness and pride, and enmity to God, which will rage to a dreadful degree, will be a souree of constant misery. These will render the shame and contempt which they shall suffer most keenly painful, and, in a sense, intolerable. They will never be in any degree reconciled to the divine decrees and government, and their dependence on God, and being absolutely in his hands; but all this will be most painful to them; they will be disposed to justify themselves, and find fault with the law of God, and his treatment of them. Their opposition to all this will be so strong and constant, and their enmity will rage, so that a constant conviction in their judgment and conscience that God deals justly with them, may not take place; and they will sometimes, if not continually, in the utmost rage, blaspheme the God of heaven. It will be beyond our present conception, painful and tormenting to them, to know that they have not a friend in the universe, and never shall have one, who will show them the least kindness, or have any pity on them; — that God is against them and will cast evil upon them, and not spare; — and all the inhabitants of heaven highly approve of his treatment of them, and praise him for his righteous judgments in punishing them as they see he does. The conviction they will have of the happiness of the redeemed, some of whom they despised and hated, when in this world, will excite their envy and malice to a high degree; which are tormenting passions, in proportion to the strength of their exercise.

Their company will add to their misery. They will not find a friend among them; but all will be full of hatred, rage, and malice. The sight and presence of the devil and his angels, who have had a great hand in their ruin, and who will continue their ill will, and torment them in all the ways their cunning and malice can invent, will be very dreadful. And whatever intercourse they may have with those of mankind

who are suffering with them, it will give them no relief, but add to their misery. And those who have had the greatest connection with each other in this life, will be most unhappy together — who have injured each other, or been the means of their eternal ruin. And those companions and supposed friends, who have tempted and seduced each other into the practice of vice, and way to ruin, will, by their mutual accusations and curses, be a vexation and torment to each other.

And all the attempts to get relief, which may be many and constant, will be in vain, and only add to their misery. Every thought and idea which passes in their mind will be a painful one. Reflections on what they have passed through in this world, (and they must think and reflect,) on the favors and comforts they had, and the advantages they were under to obtain salvation, and the happy opportunities which they abused, and the counsels, warnings, and admonitions which they had, etc., will but increase their misery. And when they look forward, the assurance they will have that nothing better is to come, but if there be any change, it will be against them, and they must be miserable without end, and without hope, will fill their minds with the insupportable gloom, anguish, and horror of absolute despair, and sink eternally without any possible comfort or support.

This is a short sketch, and some of the outlines, of the punishment and sufferings of the wicked. But O, how little can be told! How short are all our conceptions and imaginations of the truth and real greatness of this infinite evil! It will take an eternity to tell, and none but the infinite mind does comprehend it.

It must be observed, however, that though the punishment of every one of these will be endless, and great in degree beyond all present conception, and perhaps will increase without end, yet some will suffer a much greater degree of misery than others, and there will be a great difference between them in this respect, according to their different advantages and capacities while in this world; to the light and conviction they had, according to the number of their sins, and the different degrees of criminality of them, etc. The omniscient, almighty, and just Judge will be able and disposed to weigh and adjust the crimes and guilt of every one in exact and just balances, and proportion the degree of punishment exactly to the criminality or ill desert of each one, by ordering every circumstance perfectly agreeable to it. From Christ the Judge, "every one shall receive the things done in his body, *according to that he hath done*, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Agreeably to this, Christ says, it shall be more tolerable at the day

of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those who reject the gospel preached by him or his disciples. "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

IMPROVEMENT.

I. From the brief and imperfect view which has now been given of death, a separate state, judgment, heaven, and hell, we may reasonably be led to reflect upon the infinitely grand, important, and interesting scenes that are before us, in which every one of the human race will have a part. A realizing view of these will make all the things and concerns of time and sense, which are temporal, and relate to this state only, appear in their true littleness and vanity; and to be of no worth and importance, any farther than they relate to these future scenes, and may put us under advantage to be prepared for them. How reasonable and important is it that we should, with the apostles and primitive Christians, constantly look, aim at, and pursue the things which are not seen, and are eternal! (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

II. How infinitely dreadful is the end of the wicked! In what an unspeakably dangerous state is he in this world! His feet stand on slippery places, exposed to fall every moment into endless destruction, into which he will soon plunge, if he continue impenitent while in the body. "After his hard and impenitent heart, he is treasuring up unto himself in this life, wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Rom. ii. 5.)

How great is the deliverance when any one sinner is plucked as a brand from this eternal, infinitely dreadful fire! This gives joy in heaven. How happy is he who is the instrument of turning any from sin to righteousness; of saving immortal souls from endless burnings! What can be more desirable and pleasing to a benevolent mind? He shall have an unspeakable reward, and shine as the stars forever and ever.

III. How great, how glorious and happy is the Redeemer in being able to save, and actually saving multitudes of sinners from such infinite misery, and raising them to such high and endless happiness and glory! How worthy is he to be trusted, loved, and honored. The inhabitants of heaven will be eternally sensible of this, and say, "Worthy is the Lamb

that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." (Rev. v. 9, 10, 12.)

What infinite wickedness and folly is that of which they are guilty, who reject him, or cast the least slight upon him, and do not fly to him without delay, as a refuge from the wrath to come, and for eternal happiness! Blessed are all they who trust in him. Surely he is infinitely precious to all them who believe.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.

General Observations concerning the Church of Christ.

THE word in the original, ἐκκλησια, generally translated church, is found above a hundred times in the New Testament, and signifies an assembly of men, called and collected together for some special purpose. It is used in the Scripture, except in a few instances, in an appropriated sense, for believers in Christ, or the redeemed, as a collective body, or society, united in or under him as their head.

By the church of Christ is sometimes meant the redeemed, — all who have been, or shall be saved by Christ, who shall at last be collected into one general assembly, society, and kingdom. This is called the *invisible* church, being at present hid, and out of our sight, as those in heaven are not seen by us while in this life, and true believers who are on earth cannot be certainly distinguished from others who are not such.

The church of Christ on earth consists of those who are united together as professed friends to Christ, and believers in him, and are under explicit engagements to serve him, and attend upon all his institutions and ordinances, and to watch over and assist each other, including both parents and their children. This is called the *visible church* of Christ, as it is a society erected in the view of man, and consists of members who are visibly, or in appearance, among the number of the

saved, and real friends to Christ, though many of them may not be really such.

This church is considered as one common catholic society, comprehending all visible Christians in the world, composed of numerous particular societies, or assemblies of Christians, in different places, and which, by a succession of members, will continue the same society or church to the end of the world. This is meant by the church, when Christ says to Peter, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.) And the word is used in this sense in many other places. But every distinct society of visible believers, agreeing and united together to attend on the worship and ordinances of Christ, is called a church; as the church at Antioch, the church at Ephesus, the churches in Judea, the churches of Galatia, all the churches, etc.

Wherever a number of persons voluntarily unite together, under the profession of believers in Christ and friends to him, to attend upon his institutions and ordinances according to his directions and commands, they are a visible church of Christ so long and so far as they appear to embrace and maintain the great and essential truths of Christianity, and to live, in some good measure, agreeable to them.

Concerning the church of Christ in general, his visible church in this world, and such a particular church, the following things may be observed, in order to give a more clear idea of the subject, and to show the reason and importance of it:—

1. It is reasonable and important that the friends of the Redeemer should be his professed friends, and that they should unite in a profession of faith in him, and publicly espouse his cause and interest in the world, and in assisting each other, as his servants, and in attending upon his institutions and obeying his commands, hereby distinguishing themselves from the rest of mankind. Accordingly, Christ has enjoined upon his friends and disciples to confess him before men, and to form themselves into a public society, or particular societies, by which they shall be as a city that is set on a hill, which cannot be hid, — the light of the world to shine before all men. (Matt. x. 32; v. 14–16.)

2. The church of Christ is a free, voluntary society, in opposition to any force or compulsion used to oblige the members of it to join and come into it contrary to their consent and free choice. All are invited to be members of it, and none are to be rejected who appear to be willing to come and to conform to the rules which Christ has given; and none who have been received are to be rejected and cast out, who choose to

continue members, unless they behave disorderly, and refuse to obey the laws of Christ.

3. Jesus Christ is the sole legislator and ruler in his church. No particular church, or the church in general, has any authority or right to make any laws or rules in order to govern or regulate the church, or individual members of it, but are commanded to attend to those which Christ has given, and obey and execute them only.

The church is not a worldly society, and is not to be ruled or regulated by civil laws, or rulers of political, worldly societies: such rulers have no more authority in the church than any other member of it. The visible church is called, in Scripture, "the kingdom of heaven, — the kingdom of God, and of Christ," who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It is a distinct and entirely different society and kingdom from civil, worldly societies or kingdoms, and cannot be connected with them so as to be in any respect or degree dependent on them, or have any alliance with them. The church wants no support from civil authority, and ought not to be governed or controlled, in any respect, by the civil magistrate. When he attempts this, and to make laws to govern or regulate the church of Christ, he invades the rights of Christ, and usurps the authority which belongs only to the Head of the church, who is the sole ruler in it.

The church, when it is regulated by the laws of Christ, and obedient to him, is friendly to human, civil society; and Christ commands his subjects, the members of his church, to obey magistrates, and seek to promote the peace and greatest good of such societies. And all they expect or desire from the civil magistrate is to be protected in the enjoyment of their civil rights, and their religion, so long as they are not injurious to their neighbors, and live quiet and peaceable lives.

4. Every member of the church has a right to judge for himself what are the laws of Christ, and what is his duty, being accountable to none but Christ for his judgment and conduct; and none have a right or authority to dictate to him, or control him in these matters. In matters wherein the church, as a body, are to decide and act, they must be determined by the voice of the major part, or the greatest number of the members, as is done in other societies, this being considered as the voice and determination of the church. And if they be not unanimous in any thing to be determined by the church, they who dissent from the judgment of the majority must submit and conform to them, unless the judgment and conduct of the church appear to them so inconsistent with the truth, and the laws of Christ, that it is his command,

and their duty, to refuse to conform, and to leave and renounce the church. In this case, no one has any right to control them.

5. The visible church, the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, was small in the beginning of it, but is to increase and grow till it shall be great, and fill the world, and all nations shall come into it, and be members of it, and shall continue forever the only most happy and glorious society and kingdom. God has had a church in the world ever since the apostasy of man. Before the flood there were the sons of God, distinguished from the rest of mankind, who called on the name of the Lord. It continued in the family of Noah, and some of his descendants, till the days of Abraham, when it was more particularly formed in his family, and further established and regulated among those who descended from him — the people of Israel. When the Christian dispensation took place, the church put on a new form in many respects, though it was the same church as to the essentials of it, and was still the church of God, the church of Christ.

The *Christian church*, consisting of the professed followers of Christ, was small in the beginning of it; but Christ foretold that it should grow and become great, and promised that it should continue, and live on earth, to the end of the world. He said, the gates of hell (*Hades*, death) should not prevail against it; that is, that it should not die, or cease to be a visible church on earth. He represented the growth of it, till it should cover the earth and fill the world, by the following similitudes: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them. The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (Matt. xiii. 31–33.)

6. The visible church of Christ is and will be in an imperfect state, and in a greater or less degree impure and corrupt, while in this world. All the members of it are, in a great degree, imperfect, corrupt, and sinful; and many, who are totally corrupt and enemies to Christ, are professed and visible friends to him, and, as such, are admitted into his church. Christ has not made any provision by which unworthy persons, who are not his friends at heart, can be excluded from his church in this world, so long as there are such who put on the outward appearance and profession of friendship and submission to him, and offer themselves to join the society. He has not

constituted any infallible judges to determine who shall be admitted into his visible church, who are able to detect every hypocrite, and reject all who are unworthy members. When the utmost care is taken, and the rules of Christ with respect to this are faithfully regarded and practised, still the heart cannot be certainly known; and Christians must act according to the visibility, or outward appearance and profession of friendship to Christ, which hypocrites may put on, and so be admitted into the church, who have no right to a place there in the sight of God. And the members of particular churches may be, and often are, so injudicious and careless as to admit members which are visibly unqualified, and ought not to be admitted; by which the church becomes more and more corrupt, and proper discipline is not kept up, and those who ought to be cast out are tolerated; and by degrees, through the influence of erroneous teachers, great errors may be imbibed and maintained, and corrupt and evil practices take place, and many customs and rites be introduced, which Christ has not commanded, but are the inventions and commandments of men of corrupt minds, by which the purity and beauty of the church is greatly tarnished.

Particular churches, and the visible church of Christ in general, may become, in a great degree, corrupt in some or all those things; and yet be, and continue, the visible church of Christ. And it is difficult to determine how far a particular church, or the church in general, may be corrupted and deviate from the laws of Christ, and yet be visibly a church of Christ, so as to have a right to be considered and acknowledged to be a true church, though corrupt and wrong in many things. In this case, particular Christians must judge for themselves, and particular churches must judge of other churches; and great caution and prudence ought to be used. Every one ought to judge and act right, and according to the rules which Christ has given in this case, and all are accountable to him for their opinion and conduct.

A church may doubtless become so corrupt, and go off so far from the faith and practice of true Christians, and sink so far into gross errors and open conduct, contrary to the gospel and the express commands of Jesus Christ, as that it ought to be rejected as not a visible church of Christ; and his commands to his faithful followers may be, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." (2 Cor. vi. 17.) The church of Rome, or the papal church, has doubtless been visibly not a true church of Christ for many years: it has been not so, perhaps, ever since the time of the reformation from popery. Though it was

really a corrupt, false church before, yet it was not visibly so, till the marks of a false church were clearly discerned, and it was known to the reformed visible church of Christ to be the beast, and the great harlot described in the Revelation. Then the voice of Christ was heard speaking to them, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." And then she was visibly and publicly excommunicated by Christ and his visible church; and consequently was no longer a visible church of Christ, but the contrary.

The reformed church, or the different churches which have taken place in the Protestant world, upon the reformation from popery, and since, are far from being wholly purified from a great mixture of error, and from practices which are not according to revealed truth, and which would cease, were they to be conformed to the pattern described in the Word of God. Some are nearer the rule, and others farther from it; and many are doubtless greatly degenerated from what they once were; and it is probable that the spirit, maxims, and practices of antichrist, or that are really anti-Christian, do take place, in a greater or less degree, in all these churches at this day, and that they will, the most of them at least, grow more and more corrupt in doctrine and practice, till they become like the incurable leprous house in Israel, which was ordered to be wholly demolished, that another might be built in the room of it. So, when the millennium comes on, these corrupt churches, which will be too far sunk in error and sinful practices to be patched up and healed, will be removed and vanish away, sharing with antichrist in ruin, and giving way to a church which shall be built upon the gospel plan. Then the bride, the Lamb's wife, will put on her beautiful garments, and arise and shine in the light that shall then come, and the glory of the Lord which shall rise upon her.* But even then, the visible church will not be perfect in the beauty of holiness, though the uncircumcised and unclean may no more enter into it, (Isa. lii. 1,) yet not one of the members will be perfectly holy. The most perfect beauty and glory of the church will not take place till after the resurrection.

Those of different denominations and churches in the Christian world, who believe and expect there will be a more perfect state of the church in the millennium, are disposed to think, that the denomination and particular church to which they belong will be the pattern, and that all Christians will, in that day, conform to that, and that those things in which others

* See the Dissertation on the Millennium, subjoined to this system.

differ from them, both with respect to doctrine and practice, will then be relinquished and cease. But most of them, if not all, will be greatly disappointed in their views and expectations with respect to this. A church will then arise, which will have all that is good, right, and excellent, in the different denominations and churches that exist now, or have been, and will renounce all the superstitions and corruptions, in principle or practice, which have taken place. Blessed are all they who are real members of the invisible church of Christ.

Section II.

Concerning the Officers of the Church.

Every distinct and particular church, in order to be complete, and properly organized, must have officers, or persons distinguished from the members in general, by being chosen and appointed to particular service and duties, who are to superintend the affairs of the Church, to preside and act a particular part, in teaching and exhortation, and administering the ordinances which Christ has appointed, and taking particular care of the temporals of the church.

Of these, pastors, elders, presbyters or bishops, are the first and most important. By these names, not different orders, higher and lower, or different offices, are meant; but one and the same person, in one and the same office, is called by all these names, and, therefore, they denote the same office. This has been abundantly proved by many who have attended to the subject; therefore it is needless particularly to attend to it here.

The apostles were a distinct and superior order of men, and appointed by Christ immediately, as extraordinary officers, to constitute the first churches, and to give infallible rules and laws to them, by which they were to be regulated and governed; in which extraordinary office they had no successors. The apostles were elders, or presbyters, or bishops, and more; they were appointed immediately by Christ, as infallible judges and dictators to the churches. They ordained presbyters or bishops, as being such themselves, in their ordinary capacity; but their extraordinary commission was not, nor could be transmitted to others, but died with them; and there have been no apostles in the church since their death, nor will there be any such officers again in the church to the end of the world.

The apostles ordained elders or bishops in the churches which they constituted, who were first chosen by the members of

these churches, or they did it with their consent. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts xiv. 23.) The word in the original, here translated, *when they had ordained*, χειροτονησαντες, signifies to point out persons by lifting up of hands, or voting, and the sense has been given in the following words: "When they had, with the concurrent suffrage of the people, constituted presbyters for them in every church;" * or, "They ordained them elders by the votes of the people." † The old English Bible translates it, "When they had ordained them elders by election." ‡ This is essential to a free society of any kind, that the members of it should choose their own officers. There must be one or more elders in every church, in order to furnish it to all the duties and transactions of a church, and to have it complete. From the above quoted passage, it appears that one elder was ordained in every church, if not more. It appears, also, from the addresses which Christ sent to the seven churches in Asia, by his servant John, that there was but one elder in each of these churches, who is called *the angel of the church.*

The business of this office is, to preside in all the transactions of the church, to administer the ordinances of Christ, to preach the gospel, and lead in the public worship of the church — "giving themselves constantly to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts vi. 4.) To teach, exhort, warn, reprove, and rebuke publicly and more privately. The qualifications and character of these elders or bishops are particularly given and stated by the apostle Paul, in his letters to Timothy and Titus. These pastors or bishops, being chosen by the church, are constituted officers, by being publicly ordained to that office by some other elders or elder, by laying on of hands. (1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 6.) Thus Timothy and Titus were directed by the apostle Paul to ordain elders. (1 Tim. v. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5.)

It has been supposed by some, that the right and power to ordain their pastors or bishops is in the churches; at least, that it is not wholly lodged in the hands of the elders, and confined to them; and there have been some instances of the ordination of ministers by the brethren of the church, without the assistance, or even the presence of any other elder or pastor of a church. But there does not appear to be any example of this, or warrant for it, in the Scripture. It is said, if the church have

* Doddridge on the place. † Mr. Harrington.
‡ See Doddridge's note on this verse.

no authority or right to constitute and ordain their own officers, then there must be an uninterrupted succession of ministers, from the apostles to the end of the world; and if this chain of succession be once broken or interrupted, it cannot be renewed again, but the succession must necessarily cease, and there can be no more ministers and officers in the church to the end of the world. To this it may be answered, that if this be an appointment of Jesus Christ, a constitution which he has made, that his church shall be furnished with ministers by such a succession from one to another, then he will take care that it shall never be interrupted, but shall be continued so long as there is a church on earth.

But to this it has been said, that we have no evidence that such succession has not in fact been interrupted many times; and not one minister or elder at this day can prove, or have any evidence himself, that he has been ordained, by one or more who have received this right and power to ordain, by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles; which he ought to have, in order to be satisfied that he has a right to act in this office; and to be able to prove it to others, in order to their receiving and treating him as an elder. Besides, if this succession could be proved, it must be brought down through the hands of the pope, and the false anti-Christian church, which is not the church of Christ, and necessarily interrupts the succession of the ministers of Christ.

Upon this the following things are to be observed: —

1. If there be evidence from the Scriptures, that such an order and succession of men as officers in the church has been instituted by Christ, and is implied in the commission which he gave to his disciples, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. *And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) This is sufficient, positive proof that such a succession of ministers does in fact take place in the visible church of Christ, and that this commission has been transmitted down from one to another, from that time to this day; and this succession has not been interrupted, and will not be, to the end of the world. This, therefore, may safely, and with all desirable certainty, be taken for granted, without any further positive proof, by every minister of the gospel, unless there be strong positive evidence that such succession has been interrupted with respect to him, and that he has been irregularly introduced to that office by him or them who have not had their commis-

sion and authority to ordain handed down by succession from the apostles to them.

Therefore, since the above-recited commission implies that there should be a succession of officers in the church to the end of the world, to proselyte, baptize, and teach men to observe the institutions and commands of Christ, to whom he has promised his presence and assistance; and since the apostles appear to understand their commission in this light, and to practise upon it accordingly, by ordaining elders in every church which they formed; and elders or presbyters ordained others by laying on their hands; and they who were so ordained were directed to commit the gospel, that is, the preaching and dispensation of it, "to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also;" and to lay hands upon them, not suddenly, but after proper examination and acquaintance, (1 Tim. v. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2,) which can be nothing less or more than ordaining them to the work of the ministry; and Titus is directed to ordain elders in every city in the island of Crete; (Tit. i. 5; since all this is evident, and certainly so, and there can be nothing found in the Scripture to contradict such a succession appointed by Christ, or in the least inconsistent with it, it may and ought to be considered as positive evidence that there is, in fact, such an uninterrupted succession, sufficient to satisfy the judgment and conscience of an honest man, who is ordained to the work of the evangelical ministry, that he has derived his ordination and commission from Christ, by an uninterrupted succession, unless there be positive proof to the contrary, with respect to his ordination.

2. Though the succession of ordinations, in order to its being uninterrupted, must come through the hands of the pope, and the ministers of the church of Rome, (which is not certain, as it has been shown how it might be transmitted down by others who were not members of that church,) yet this affords no positive proof that a proper, uninterrupted succession has not taken place. A visible church may be very corrupt, and yet be a visible church of Christ, and the public administrations and acts of the officers of it authentic and valid. And who can prove that the pope and his adherents were visibly antichrist, and that the church of Rome was visibly not the church of Christ, but a false church, and was really and properly renounced and excommunicated by the true church of Christ, before the time of the reformation from popery? During the preceding dark times, there was not light enough, even among real Christians in general, to render that church visibly not the church of Christ; and so long as

this was the case, the officers, the ministers in that church, were visible ministers of Christ, and their visible acts, their ordinations, etc., were valid, notwithstanding they were very corrupt and wicked.* When the reformation came on, light arose and increased, and the great corruptions and wickedness of the church of Rome, and of particular churches included in it, and the irregularity and wickedness of the officers of it, and of their administrations, were clearly seen and exposed; and they were admonished, and great pains were taken to convince and reform the pope and his clergy, and all orders and degrees of men in that church. But they who still adhered to that church were deaf and obstinate, and refused to repent and reform. Upon which, those who were convinced of the errors and wickedness of that church came out and separated from it, and formed other churches more agreeable to the Word of God, among whom there were ministers, or numbers of the clergy, who had been ordained in the church of Rome, while that was visibly a church of Christ. They, by the consent of the reformed churches, took the oversight of them, and administered ordinances, and ordained others to be elders in the churches; and in this way an uninterrupted succession of ordinations and ministers in the Protestant churches in general has taken place, and may continue down to the end of the world, and certainly will, if this be the will and appointment of Christ, though the church of Rome should be considered *now* not the visible church of Christ, and properly excommunicated, agreeably to the laws of Christ; and though there may have been some instances of irregular ordinations, and which have not taken place in this succession in some Protestant churches.

3. There is satisfactory and abundant evidence from history and otherwise, that it has been the general, if not the universal, custom of the churches to ordain ministers by the laying on of the hands of others who were before so ordained, and that great care has been taken to keep up a succession in this way. And even those churches who have believed they had

* A minister in the purest church may be a very wicked man, and practise abominable vices. But so long as this is not visible and known, he is a visible minister of Christ, and his public administrations are as authentic and valid as those of any other minister, until he is detected, and his wickedness becomes visible, and he is deposed from his office in the church by those who have a right to do it, according to the laws of Christ. So the church of Rome was visibly a church of Christ, till there was light to discover, or eyes to see, the corruptions and wickedness of it, and the veil and covering was taken off, so that the marks of the beast and the great harlot, described in the Scripture, were publicly seen to be upon it, and events took place by which it was visibly rejected by Christ, for the great apostasy of which the members of it had been guilty, and who continued visibly impenitent.

the power of ordination of their ministers within themselves, have generally thought it most regular and proper to have them ordained by other ordained ministers, when and where this was practicable. And there have been very few instances of ordinations performed without the assistance of one or more who had been before ordained in this way; and if there have been any such, they have had no influence to interrupt a general and almost universal succession of ordinations by the hands of presbyters, from the apostles down to this time.

When all this is well considered, will it not be evident that every minister of the gospel, who has been ordained by the hands of presbyters, or bishops, or at least of one, by whatever name they or he may be called, has good warrant to consider himself and act as a visible minister of Christ, who has received his commission and authority for this from Christ by an uninterrupted succession, unless there be good, positive evidence that this cannot be true with respect to himself, he being a known exception from what has generally, and almost universally, taken place?

It has been objected to the doctrine of an uninterrupted succession, as necessary to continue this order of officers in the church, that this will, in many instances, put it beyond the power of Christians to obtain ministers or pastors, so as to be a regular church, and have the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper administered to them. A number of Christians may be cast away on a desolate island, and be obliged to live there, where they cannot obtain a pastor, unless they can ordain him themselves, and give him authority to perform all the business of this office. And a number of true Christians may live in a country, and at a time, where no ministers can be found who will ordain any one to be their minister, whom they shall choose, or think to be fit, for that office. Must those be deprived of ministers and the ordinances of the gospel?

A reply to such an objection has been already suggested. It is really begging the question; for, if Christ has made such a constitution, and ordained that those officers in his church shall be continued by an uninterrupted succession, he will not only see that it does take place, and that it shall not be interrupted, but will always put it in the power of his people to be supplied with ministers in this way; and there never has been an instance to contradict this, and never will be. The supposition, therefore, which is made in the objection, is a groundless one, and impossible. Christ will not suffer such an instance to take place, unless it be for his glory, the good of his church in general, and best for the individual Christians, who

are deprived, in this way, of gospel ministers and ordinances; and if there be any such instances, they can be no objection to this institution of Christ.

These ministers and officers in the church are to be devoted to the business of their station and office, and to give themselves to this work which they have undertaken, in preaching the gospel and administering the ordinances of Christ — in taking care of the church, and presiding in all the public transactions of it, acting with the concurrence and consent of the church; for they have no authority to dictate to the church, and control it in any matter, contrary to their judgment and consent. They are, indeed, said to *have the rule over* the churches, (Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24,) but this means only to take the lead or preside in the churches in their public devotions and transactions, as the word in the original signifies. The churches, and every particular member of them, are obliged to submit to them and obey them, so far as they preach the doctrines of the gospel, and urge the commands of Christ; for, so far as they do this, they have all the authority of Christ; and disobedience to them, when they declare the will of Christ and urge obedience to his laws, is disobedience to Christ, and rejecting him. But of this the members of the church are to judge for themselves, whether what they preach and dictate be agreeable to the revealed will of Christ; and if they judge it to be contrary to revealed truth, they will consider the minister as having no authority, and themselves under no obligation to regard him in those things; and he has no authority to compel them to obedience to his dictates, or to inflict any punishment upon them, or subject them to any worldly inconvenience on this account. They are, indeed, accountable to Christ for their judgment and conduct in such cases, and to him alone, as he has commanded them to judge and act right, and will condemn every thing that is not so, and is the final Judge to whom all appeals are to be made.* Thus the elders of the churches are not to be lords over them, but to lead them, and be examples to them, while they preside as overseers, or bishops, feeding them by preaching the truths of the gospel to them, and declaring the whole counsel of God. (1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Acts xx. 28.)

* This is said with reference to the whole, or the majority, of a church. If particular members, or the minor part of a church, reject the doctrines, and refuse to practise the duties, which the pastor inculcates as prescribed by Christ, and the majority of the church approve of them, the former are so far accountable to the church as to be the proper subjects of discipline, and may be rejected by the church as those who, in their judgment, refuse to obey the truth, and walk disorderly.

There are other officers in the church, called deacons, who have the care of the temporal, worldly concerns of the church. The church, when regulated according to the laws of Christ, makes provision for the support of public religion — for a decent and convenient place in which they may attend public worship, the support of the ministers of the gospel, and furnishing the table of the Lord. They are, also, to provide for the relief and comfort of the poor members of the church. The care and oversight of this provision is committed to the deacons. And they are, more especially, to distribute to the poor, out of the common stock of the church, and take care that no one may suffer for want of the necessaries and comforts of life. We have a particular account of the institution of those officers in the church, in the beginning of the sixth chapter of the Acts. The church pointed out and chose those whom they thought best qualified for this office, and presented them to the apostles, who ordained them to this office by laying their hands on them and praying.

It does not appear, from the Scripture, that there are more distinct orders of men and officers appointed in the church than these two, viz., elders or bishops, and deacons. Both of these are repeatedly mentioned together as being the only officers in the church, as nothing is said of any other. The apostle Paul, when he is directing Timothy in his regulating the churches in which he had a particular concern, and ordaining officers, mentions only elders or bishops, and deacons, and particularly describes the qualifications of these. And he directs his letter to the church at Philippi in the following words: "To all the saints which are in Christ Jesus, at Philippi, with the *bishops* and *deacons*." Had there been any other order of officers in that church, it may be presumed he would have mentioned them when he directs so particularly to these. This same apostle says, that, when Christ ascended to heaven, "he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." (Eph. iv. 11.) Some have supposed there are more than two orders of ministers mentioned here; but there does not appear to be any evidence of this. By apostles and prophets are intended the extraordinary gifts and officers in the primitive church, who were not to continue, but ceased when those miraculous gifts, with which they were endowed, ceased, the church having no further need of them. And if evangelists were not also extraordinary officers, and, accordingly, ceased with the others mentioned before, they were ordinary ministers of the gospel, ordained to travel and preach at large, not being confined to a particular church, city, or country. Pastors and teachers were

the same office, which every elder in particular churches sustained, so that, by evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but one sort and degree of officers is meant, viz., ministers of the gospel.

Section III.

Public Institutions, Ordinances, and Worship of the Church.

Social and public worship, consisting in prayer, singing psalms or hymns, and in preaching and hearing the gospel, appears to be an institution of Christ, from what is recorded in Scripture. The disciples of Christ, after his ascension, met together, and continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, being about an hundred and twenty. (Acts i. 14, 15.) And when converts were multiplied, and a church was formed at Jerusalem, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers. And continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising God." (Acts ii. 42, 46, 47.) At Antioch, Barnabas and Saul assembled themselves with the church a whole year, and taught much people. (Acts xi. 26.) It appears that the church at Corinth often came together into one place, to attend on the preaching of the gospel, prayer, singing psalms, and the administration of the Lord's supper. (1 Cor. xi. 18, etc., and chap. xiv. throughout.) Christians had places convenient for them to convene in public assemblies, and attend on public worship. (Jam. ii. 1–10.) And they were commanded "not to forsake the assembling themselves together" for public exhortation and mutual edification, etc. (Heb. x. 24, 25.)

Public worship being an institution of Christ, this necessarily implies a place where this may be attended decently, and with the greatest convenience to the members of the church, which is to be agreed upon and provided by the church, using all such help and assistance as the head of the church shall, in his providence, afford them. They are to assemble on the first day of the week for public worship, and at any other time which the church shall judge is agreeable to the will of Christ, as best suited to promote his cause and their edification. And there may be special calls in divine providence, to public fasting and prayer, or thanksgiving; and particular circumstances may render it proper and important to meet oftener, and to spend more time in public worship, at some times than at others.

It has been observed that the bishops, or overseers of the church, are to preach the word, and to preside and lead in

public prayers, to which they are to devote themselves; and they are on this account to be counted worthy of double honor, and be decently supported with the necessaries and comforts of life. For Christ has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (1 Cor. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.)

The stated time for public worship is the first day of the week, which the apostles, under the inspiration and particular direction from Christ, fixed upon, and appointed to be the Christian Sabbath. The Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, which was a type and shadow of that redemption which was in a peculiar sense and degree effected by the sufferings and death of Christ, from which he rose on the first day of the week, and of the rest into which the Christian church entered, upon this ceased and was abolished, when the substance and the things typified by it took place. With reference to this, the apostle Paul says to Christians, "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, *or of the Sabbath days*, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 16, 17.) The apostle has respect to the Jewish rites respecting meat and drink, and to their feast days, new moons, and their weekly Sabbaths, and declares that Christians, especially those who were Gentiles, were not under any obligation to observe them. This has no respect to the Christian Sabbath. This was observed by the apostles and Christian churches in their day. Christ having risen on the first day of the week, he appeared repeatedly to his disciples, while they were together on this first day. And on this first day of the week, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and they were all with one accord in one place," the Holy Spirit was poured out on them, and they spake with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And Peter preached to the multitude who were collected on that occasion, and great numbers were converted. (Acts ii. 1, etc.) The day of Pentecost was always on the first day of the week. (Lev. xxiii. 15–21.) And this day of the week was honored by this remarkable event, and not the seventh day of the week, which was the Jewish Sabbath. And no reason can be given why the church were together in one place on that day, but that it was the day of the week on which they were directed, and used to assemble for instruction and worship.

Accordingly, we find that, on the first day of the week, Christian churches used to assemble for public worship, with the apostles' approbation. When the apostle Paul, and his companions in travelling, came to Troas, they continued there

seven days without meeting for public worship. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." (Acts xx. 7.) By this it appears, that the first day of the week was the day on which Christians used to meet for public worship. If the seventh day of the week had been their Sabbath, why did they not meet on that day to hear Paul preach and to break bread, that is, to partake of the Lord's supper? That Christian churches were wont to meet on the first day of the week for religious purposes, is evident from the following direction which this apostle gives to the church at Corinth: "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye: upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) It appears from this, that Christian churches in general, or rather universally, assembled together on every first day of the week; the reason of which cannot be given, unless this were their Sabbath, on which day they attended public worship. And this was a proper time to make a collection for the poor saints, which is to be considered as an act of public worship. Nor can it be supposed that the churches would all agree in fixing on this day, to meet together for public worship, unless it were by the direction of the apostles, which they gave to all the churches, as from Christ, who had instructed them in this matter before his ascension, or had since communicated it to them by inspiration. In this view, there appears a consistency in all the facts and assertions concerning this which have been mentioned.

And the words of the apostle John are a confirmation of all this, when he says, "I was in the spirit *on the Lord's day.*" (Rev. i. 10.) By the Lord's day, he must mean some particular day of the week, which was known by this name to the churches of Christ, as distinguished from all other days; for otherwise it would not be saying any thing which would be intelligible to Christians, or of any signification. It supposes there was one day in the week consecrated to the honor and service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this was therefore called *the Lord's day;* as that repast of bread and wine, which was instituted by Christ, and observed in the churches, *in remembrance of him*, was called *the Lord's supper*, to distinguish it from all other eating and drinking together, as peculiarly consecrated to his use and honor. And that this day, which for this reason the apostle John calls the Lord's day, is the first day of the week, is evident beyond a doubt, in that this day, and no other day of the week, has been distinguished and

known by this name, in the church of Christ, from that day to this, of which there is incontestable evidence.

And that the first day of the week is appointed by Christ to be the Christian Sabbath, to be observed by his church as holy time, and distinguished from other days by being devoted by them, in a peculiar manner, to his service and honor, will be further evident, perhaps, and some objections removed, by the following observations: —

1. It is evident, from divine revelation, that it is the will of God that one day in seven should be observed as a Sabbath by his people, to the end of the world, and not under the Mosaic dispensation only.

This may be argued from the institution of a holy Sabbath, which God blessed and sanctified, when he first made man: having himself wrought six days, and finished the work of creation, he rested on the seventh. And this is mentioned in the fourth commandment as a reason why men, after they had attended to secular business six days, should rest from such labor, and observe the seventh day as a holy Sabbath.

And the command, to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, etc., being given from Mount Sinai, and written on one of the tables of stone, and put into the ark with the rest of the commands, containing the moral law, which is perpetually binding on all men, and in this way distinguished from those particular precepts which were temporary, this is a strong argument that it is equally perpetual with the other nine commands, and points out the duty of all men, at all times, to whom this command shall be made known. If this command respected that nation only, and were to cease when the Mosaic dispensation ended, it cannot be accounted for that it should be revealed in the same peculiar manner with that in which the moral law was revealed and incorporated with the moral law, written with it, on tables of stone, and put into the ark. It has all the external marks of being perpetual and binding on all men, which attend the rest of the commands of the moral law.

Moreover, there are some things said in the Scripture, which indicate that it is the will and design of God that the command to keep holy the Sabbath day should take place and be observed under the gospel. The fifty-sixth chapter of Isaiah is evidently a prophecy of gospel times; and there, keeping the Sabbath from polluting it is repeatedly mentioned, as an important duty, to which promises are made; and in the eleventh chapter are these words, with reference to Christ and the gospel dispensation: "And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall

the Gentiles seek, *and his rest shall be glorious.*" The word translated *rest*, is the same which in other places is translated *Sabbath.* His Sabbath shall be glorious. And it is not improbable that the Psalmist has reference to the first day of the week, as distinguished and appointed by Christ, and made holy by him, as the day on which he rose from the dead. He foretells the resurrection of Christ in the following words: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." These words are cited by the apostle Peter, and applied to the resurrection of Christ. (Acts iv. 11.) The Psalmist adds, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. *This is the day which the Lord hath made;* we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Ps. cxviii. 22–24.) These words, "this is the day which the Lord hath made," considered in their connection with the foregoing, and referring to the resurrection of Christ, may naturally be understood of the day on which Christ rose, as a day of the week which should be a joyful day to the church, on which this great and happy event should be celebrated by believers in Christ to the end of the world; it being made by him, and appointed to be a holy Sabbath of rest, and peculiar gladness and praise.

2. The fourth command in the decalogue does not specify any particular day of the week to be kept holy as a Sabbath, but only commands men to observe one day in seven as a holy Sabbath. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." We must look somewhere else in divine revelation to find what day of the week is to be observed as a Sabbath, and when to begin to reckon. The Israelites were told which day of the week they should keep holy as a Sabbath, but not in this command. The day of the week on which their Sabbath should be was made known to them before this command was given from Mount Sinai; therefore, this command obliged them to keep the seventh day of the week as their Sabbath. And when Christ made it known to his church, that it was his will that the first day of the week, on which he rose from the dead, should be observed as a Sabbath, he having abolished the Jewish Sabbath, this laid Christians under as great obligations to keep the first day of the week as their Sabbath as the Jews were under to keep the seventh day; and this did not in the least degree set aside, or alter, the fourth command; for Christians remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, when they, having attended to their secular business six days, keep the seventh day as a holy day of rest from all unnecessary worldly employment. And the fourth command as much binds them to keep their Sabbath on the first day of the

week, as it did the children of Israel to keep the seventh day. The evidence that Christ has revealed this to be his will, has been briefly stated above.

3. The Jewish Sabbath was not to be perpetual, but did cease and vanish away with other types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation, being equally a shadow with them, and in some respects the greatest and most remarkable type, which will be more fully considered under the next particular. That the weekly Jewish Sabbath is abolished, seems to be expressly asserted by the apostle Paul, in the words which have been mentioned. (Col. ii. 16, 17.) But since the Sabbath of the fourth command is to be perpetual, and the Jewish Sabbath was not so, it follows, that another day of the week is appointed by Christ, who is Lord of the Sabbath, to be observed by his church, which appears, from what has been observed above, to be the first day of the week.

4. There is no evidence from Scripture, that the Sabbath which God gave to the people of Israel, by Moses, was on the same day of the week with that which was instituted when the work of creation was finished; but it is very probable, if not certain, that it was not.

The day on which God rested from the work of creation, and which he blessed and sanctified to be a holy Sabbath for man, was the seventh day from the beginning of the creation; but it was really the first day of Adam's life. He was created on the latter part of the sixth day, but soon fell into a deep sleep, and had no great enjoyment or thought till the next day. It is certain the Sabbath day was the first whole day of his life, and he would naturally begin to reckon time and weeks from that day, as the first day in the rotation of weeks.* This day was observed by the antediluvian church, and by Noah and his posterity, as the first day of their week; which has continued by an uninterrupted rotation of weeks to this day. When mankind, after the flood, corrupted their religion, and apostatized from the instituted worship of the only true God to idolatry, and deified and worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, which was the first kind of idolatry practised by mankind, they consecrated their Sabbath, which was the *first* day of their week, and considered as a high day, the most important and honorable of any of the days of the week, to the sun, which is the first and brightest luminary of the heavens, devoting this day

* See Bedford's *Scripture Chronology, demonstrated by Astronomical Calculations;* and Kennedy's *Complete System of Astronomical Chronology, unfolding the Scriptures;* in which they have undertaken to demonstrate, by astronomical calculations, that the seventh day from the beginning of the creation has been reckoned the first day of the week from that time to this.

to the worship of this god; and hence it obtained the name of *Sunday;* that is, the day of the sun, as it was devoted to the worship of this heavenly luminary, as most or all the other days of the week have had names given them from the particular planets to the worship of which they were devoted. The original Sabbath, or the first day of the week, being thus perverted, God saw fit, for this and other reasons, some of which will be mentioned, to appoint another day of the week to be a Sabbath to the children of Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt. He ordered it so that they should pass through the Red Sea on the seventh day of the week, which completed their redemption, and deliverance from Egypt, and he appointed that day of the week to be their Sabbath, in commemoration of this remarkable deliverance; on which day they praised God for this redemption, and sang the song recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. And in the next chapter this their Sabbath is first mentioned, and was probably the statute and ordinance which God made with that people, spoken of, chapter xv. verse 25. And when some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather manna, and found none, the Lord said, "See that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath; therefore, he giveth you, on the sixth day, the bread of two days." *The Lord hath given you the Sabbath.* This naturally expresses his having then appointed a day to be their Sabbath, as peculiar to that people, and not that he had appointed a Sabbath for all mankind when men were first created. There were two reasons, if not more, for appointing this seventh day of the week to be their Sabbath.

First. This was suited, with many other laws which were given to them, to keep them a distinct and separate people from other nations, and prevent their joining with others in their idolatrous improvement of the first day of the week. This was then observed by the nations round them as a high day, and a festival in honor of the sun and other gods which they worshipped, and it was of great importance that they should be kept a distinct people, and not join with them. Their keeping another day of the week for their Sabbath was suited to do this as much or more than any other law which was given them for this end, excepting circumcision. Accordingly, they were, in after ages, mentioned with contempt, and ridiculed by the heathen for this peculiarity.

Secondly. As their deliverance out of Egypt was a great and remarkable event, and a designed type and pledge of the redemption and salvation of the church by Christ, it was proper, and of the greatest importance, that it should be kept in mind, and commemorated by a day appointed to be ob-

served out of particular respect to that event. Therefore, that day of the week was fixed upon by God to be their weekly Sabbath, on which this deliverance was completed. This appears to be the truth respecting this appointment, from the words of Moses. When speaking to them of the command of God to keep their Sabbath, he says, God commanded them to keep it out of respect to this deliverance. "Keep the Sabbath day, to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; *therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.*" (Deut. v. 15.) This must respect the seventh-day Sabbath, which was peculiar to them, appointed out of respect to that deliverance, and more especially to commemorate that, not only as a great event in itself, but as a remarkable type of the spiritual and eternal redemption of the church of Christ, which is mentioned and referred to in the Scripture as such. (See Isa. li. 9–11. 1 Cor. x. 1–11. Jude 5.) This is the reason of God's appointing the seventh day of the week for *their* Sabbath, and commanding *them* to keep it as a Sabbath day, but is no reason why other nations and mankind at all times should observe a Sabbath. Therefore, in the fourth command, which was written on one of the tables of stone, and put into the ark, and is binding on all men, in all ages, this is not mentioned as a reason for observing it, nor is any particular day of the week pointed out, as has been observed. The seventh day of the week had been before given to the Israelites for their Sabbath, and Moses gives the reason for this particular appointment and command of God to them, in the words above rehearsed. And the fourth command in the decalogue was a command to them to keep the seventh day of the week as a Sabbath, because God had before fixed on this day for them to observe. But it prescribes no particular day to any other people, unless it be the first day of the week, sanctified by God, and handed down from the first Sabbath, and which has been established by Christ to be the holy Sabbath for Christians; which lays the Christian church under as great obligations from the fourth command to observe the first day of the week as their Sabbath, as those under which the Israelites were to observe the seventh day of the week as their Sabbath.

The seventh-day Sabbath, being given to the Mosaic church as a commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, which was a distinguished type in that typical church, was itself, therefore, a typical institution, and a shadow of good things

to come, as was the passover, and other festivals in that church. Therefore, with truth and the greatest propriety, the apostle Paul mentions their weekly Sabbaths, with other Mosaic institutions, as shadows of things to come, which, of course, ceased and were done away when the things of which they were types and shadows took place. (Col. ii. 16, 17.) And then the Sabbath took place, according to its original institution and course, on the first day of the week, and perfectly agreeable to the fourth command, and, in a degree, more so than the Jewish Sabbath.

5. Upon the whole it must be observed, that some time should be fixed upon, and set apart, and distinguished from other time, to be in a peculiar manner devoted to the exercises of piety and public worship, in which all pious men and Christians should agree and unite, appears reasonable, desirable, and important. If this were left to men, they would not be competent judges of the proportion of time that it would be most suitable and proper to be set apart for those purposes, and could never agree in the particular days, and the precise proportion of time, that should be thus distinguished and improved. And, if they could do all this, they have no power or authority to make one part of time, or one day, more sacred, or relatively holy, than another. God alone, who is the owner and Lord of time and of all things, can make this distinction, and in this sense *sanctify* any day or part of time, and set it apart for particular holy purposes; and he only has authority to command men to observe it accordingly, and keep it holy; and he only knows what proportion of time is wisest and best to be thus sanctified, so as to be best suited to answer the purposes of it, and circumstances of man, to promote the good of his church. It is, therefore, desirable, and to be expected, that God would determine this in the revelation which he gives to the world. Accordingly, we find he has done it, when he first made man, specifying the day which he blessed and sanctified, and setting an example to man, that, after six days of labor, he should rest from his worldly business on the seventh day, and keep it holy. This he afterwards inserted among those commands containing a perpetual moral law, commanding men — all men, without distinction — to observe the Sabbath, and keep one day in seven holy, or the seventh day, after six days' labor. In the mean time, for particular, wise, important reasons, he separated a people from all other nations, and formed them into a church, giving them laws and statutes suited to keep them separate from the idolatrous nations, and to point out by types and emblems the Redeemer of man, and the great salvation by him, and to pre-

pare the way for his coming into the world, dying and rising again, and setting up his kingdom on earth. And among the rest, they received a command to keep the seventh day of the week as a holy Sabbath, which was much insisted upon during that dispensation as an important article, which should be to them a constant, visible sign that they were a holy people, devoted to God. When the end of this seventh-day Sabbath was fully answered, and the thing of which this, and the event it was to commemorate, were a type and shadow, took place, it was abolished, and the Sabbath of the first day of the week took place by his order and command, who is Lord of the Sabbath, in commemoration of his resurrection from the dead, and the eternal redemption of the church which he had obtained by his blood, and which he arose to accomplish.

And nothing could be more suited by this institution to gratify and please the friends of Christ, than to have the first day of the week, on which their dear Lord arose from the dead, consecrated and sanctified, that they may keep a holy Sabbath on this day, and honor and praise him, and celebrate the work of redemption. This has been, to the people of God in general, in the Christian church ever since, a high day, a delight, holy of the Lord, and honorable, and is so even now. And if any of the true servants of Christ be otherwise minded, God will show it unto them.*

It has been a question, upon which professing Christians have been divided, when a Christian Sabbath begins, — at what time of the twenty-four hours of the day it commences, — whether at the setting of the sun, at midnight, or when the light comes on in the morning. Some have supposed that it cannot be certainly determined, and that it is of no importance when it begins; — that if persons act conscientiously, and according to their own judgment, though they differ, and one observes the night preceding the day, and the other the night following the day, they are equally right, and do equally well. Others, being at a loss about the time of beginning the Sabbath, will observe both the evening before and that after the day, that they may be sure to keep the right.

* That the first day of the week, which is the Christian Sabbath, is the same day of the week which was sanctified as a Sabbath when creation was finished, appears probable from what has been observed, and, it is thought, serves in some degree to illustrate this point. But though this supposition be natural and probable, and there be nothing in Scripture inconsistent with it, yet it is not pretended to be demonstration, or necessary in order to prove the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath. For, if what has been supposed and observed concerning this be considered as mere conjecture, and without any foundation, the other arguments for the abolition of the Jewish Sabbath, and the divine appointment of the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath, stand good, and sufficiently establish the point.

Perhaps the following observations may give some light on this point. They are offered to the serious, attentive, and unprejudiced.

1. If God has sanctified one day in seven, or the first day of the week, all the hours of that day, being twenty-four, are holy time; and there is a time when they begin independent of us, or our opinion or practice. Man cannot make any time holy. If God have not done it, there is no holy time; and if it be made holy by him, it is so independent of man; and the hours which are sanctified are fixed and stated, so that, when the first hour of that time comes, it is holy time, and continues so, till twenty-four hours be passed; and then holy time ceases till another Sabbath comes on, and commences at the same hour that the preceding Sabbath did. And men cannot change or commute it by neglecting that time which God has sanctified, and keeping some other day, or hours of another day, as holy time. Therefore, if the first day of the week be sanctified, the precise hours of that day, from beginning to end, and when they begin, are fixed, and all those hours are holy time, and not those which precede or follow, and it is a piece of superstition to keep them as holy time. Therefore, —

2. We have reason to believe and be sure, that there is light enough in the Bible to discover to every Christian who will faithfully use the advantages he has, to get light on this head, when, or at what time, the Sabbath begins, as well as what day of the week is sanctified as a Sabbath. For if such light and information be not given, the command to keep the day holy cannot reach him, as he has no capacity to obey it. There may be light enough in the Scripture to determine this, and yet not be seen by Christians, through some blamable defect in them. They may be too inattentive, or prejudiced, or both, and follow the opinion of others, without properly examining for themselves, with that care and honest impartiality which becomes a Christian; and be satisfied with arguments which really have no weight in them. If this be not decided by any one express declaration in Scripture, telling when the Sabbath is to begin, it may be as clearly revealed otherwise, to an attentive, honest, discerning mind. Whatever proposition or truth clearly follows from what God has said in his word, from beginning to end, is part of divine revelation, and is the light and truth it contains, or is discovered by it.

3. This cannot be determined by the hour, or time of day, on which the Redeemer rose out of the grave or tomb; for this is not certainly known, which would have been revealed, had the time of beginning the Sabbath depended on this. But if it were known, this would not decide the matter; for no rea-

son can be given why the day, which is sanctified as a commemoration of that event, should begin precisely at the hour when he rose from the dead. But if any reference be had to the time of the resurrection of Christ, it is as probable, and perhaps more so, that he rose soon after the Jewish Sabbath ended, which was at sunsetting, when the first day of the week did certainly begin, unless there were a chasm of time between the seventh day of one week and the first day of another, and which belonged to neither. Matthew says, "In the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, came (or went) to see the sepulchre." The same word in the original, here rendered *began to dawn*, is used by Luke, and rendered *drew on:* "The Sabbath drew on;" (Luke xxiii. 54;) and it must have that meaning there. And the words of Matthew may be accordingly rendered: "In the end of the Sabbath, as the first day of the week drew on, as soon as the Jewish Sabbath was over, which ended at sundown, these women went to the sepulchre;" that is, sat out to go: but that earthquake and storm, which Matthew goes on to relate, took place then, and stopped them on their way, and prevented their getting there till next morning; at which time of the earthquake, etc., Christ rose from the dead, the first day of the week having began.* So that he rose on the first day of the week, as much as if he had lain in the grave till midnight, or the next morning. But be this as it may, the time of the first day of the week, on which Christ rose from the dead, whether between sundown and dark, or at midnight, or at the dawning of the day, or at the rising of the sun, were it certainly known, cannot determine when the Sabbath begins.

4. The time in which men consider their civil day as beginning and ending, will not determine when the Sabbath, which God has sanctified, begins or ends. In this, men are arbitrary, and different nations begin their civil day at different times and hours.

5. Time did not begin with light, or in the morning; but darkness, or night, preceded the light of the first day; and the evening and the morning were the first day, and not the morning and the evening. And so the succeeding days, in which the world was created, are reckoned to begin with the evening, or night, and to end with the light. "And the evening and the morning were the second day," etc. Therefore, the seventh day, from the beginning of creation, which was blessed and sanctified as a Sabbath, began with the evening, and ended

* See Mr. Knight's Harmony, on Matt. xxviii. 1.

with the light, or with the setting of the sun. By this we learn how time was reckoned by God, and at what time he fixed the beginning of the day; not in the morning, or at midnight, but the evening which preceded the morning. And the first Sabbath which was sanctified began at evening, and included the night preceding the light of the day. And why is not this a sufficient guide to us, in determining when the day is to begin, which God has set apart for himself, and made holy? We are told by him how he reckoned time and days when they first began, and that he connected the preceding night with the following light, to make a whole day; and that he sanctified such a day, which began in the evening and ended at the next evening, and blessed it for the use of man; and may it not be safely and with certainty inferred that all holy days, which God hath made so, begin with the evening, since there is no intimation in the Bible that he has altered his way of reckoning days, since the beginning of time, nor has left it to men to determine as they please? but the contrary; for,—

6. When God made known, and gave a weekly Sabbath to the children of Israel, and appointed other holy days, he ordered them to begin all of them at the evening, or going down of the sun. This none will dispute, who attends properly to his Bible.

The Jews, when Christ was on earth, began their Sabbath at the setting of the sun, and ended it at the same time of the day. This is evident from what is related by three of the evangelists. (Matt. viii. 16. Mark i. 32. Luke iv. 40.) When Christ had attended the public exercises of the synagogue on the Sabbath, and had cured a man found there possessed by an unclean spirit, he went into the house of Simon; "and at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils; and all the city were gathered together at the door." The rulers and doctors among the Jews held and taught that it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath, and strictly forbid all persons coming to Christ on that day. When Jesus healed a woman whom he found in the synagogue on the Sabbath, "the rulers of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." (Luke xiii. 14.) Therefore, the people did not bring any of the diseased to Christ to be healed on the Sabbath day. But at evening, when the sun was set, they came in crowds to the house where Jesus was, bringing their sick and possessed to Christ to be healed. This fact renders it certain, that the Jews

did then consider the Sabbath as ended when the sun did set; consequently they began at the setting of the sun. And the Jews have practised agreeable to this from that time down to this day, beginning their Sabbaths and all their other festivals at the going down of the sun.

Jesus and his disciples observed the Jewish Sabbath, which began and ended at the setting of the sun; and the apostles would of course begin the Christian Sabbath at the same time, which succeeded the Jewish Sabbath, on the first day of the week, and began when that ended; and ought to do so, unless they had a particular command to begin it at a different time, of which there is not the least intimation. Though the Jewish Sabbath is abolished, and the first day of the week is appointed to be the Christian Sabbath, and thus *the day* is altered, yet this is no warrant to alter the time of *beginning* the day, but it must remain the same, unless God has manifested it to be his will that it should be altered, and fixed another time on which to begin the day, which he has not done. Since the change is only of the day, and not of the time of beginning it, and the first day began when the seventh day ended, which was at sundown, is not this sufficient evidence that it is the will of God that the Christian Sabbath shall begin at the going down of the sun, when the Jewish Sabbath ended? And does not this, in conjunction with what has been observed in the preceding particular, sufficiently discover the will of God respecting the beginning of the holy days, which he makes so for the use of man? And is it not presumption and will-worship, to begin the Sabbath at any other time of the day, without a divine warrant, sufficient to counteract what God has done and revealed, in the instances which have been mentioned?

7. It is as proper and convenient to begin the Sabbath at sundown as at any other time, and in some respects more so. A care and exertion to have all worldly affairs and business finished so as to be laid aside by that particular time, is a proper expression of regard to a divine institution. And if the heads of a family, and their household, be pious, and delight in the Sabbath, they will find no insuperable difficulty, in ordinary cases, to be prepared to meet and welcome the Sabbath when the time comes on, and come together and begin it in joining in social worship. The Jews find no insuperable difficulty or inconvenience in punctually beginning their Sabbath at sundown, when they commonly join in social worship. And Christians may certainly, with equal convenience and propriety, begin their Sabbath at the same time.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Baptism is an ordinance, or sacrament, which Christ has instituted. This is to be performed by the application of water to the person baptized, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In order to be a proper subject of baptism, a person, if adult, must profess his faith in Christ, and subjection to him, and engage to do all those things which he has commanded, and appear to be a true Christian, or real believer in Christ, and to understand and believe the great and essential doctrines and precepts of the gospel. This ordinance is to be applied to every one who appears to be qualified, according to the rules which Christ has given, to be a member of the visible church. And no one is to be considered and treated as a member of the church and kingdom of Christ unless he be baptized with water, as this is the only door by which persons can be introduced into the visible kingdom of Christ, according to his appointment; and all who are baptized according to his direction are visible members of his church. Christ, in his commission to his disciples, directed them to baptize all whom they proselyted. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) And we find, by the history we have of their preaching and conduct, that they practised accordingly. The words of Christ to Nicodemus express the essential qualifications by which a person becomes a true and real member of his visible church. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) By the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, when mentioned by Christ, he commonly means his visible church and kingdom in this world. By being born of the Spirit, is meant that renovation of heart by which persons become real Christians and members of the invisible kingdom of Christ. To be born of water is to be baptized with water according to the institution and command of Christ, by which persons enter into the visible church, and become members of the visible kingdom of God, without which they cannot enter into this kingdom, as this is the only appointed way to enter into that covenant of which baptism is the initiating seal, and so to be made a visible member of this kingdom. The former, his being born of the Spirit, does not make him a member of the visible church or kingdom of God. But in order to this, he must profess his faith, and enter into covenant, and have this visible seal of the covenant put upon him. As a person may be born of the Spirit before he is a visible member of the kingdom of God,

and must be so in order to be a real and true member at any time, and he is supposed and appears to be such a one when he is baptized, and by it becomes a visible member of this kingdom; so a person may appear to be born of the Spirit, and profess that which implies it, and be baptized and enter into the visible kingdom of God, and yet not be really born of the Spirit. He is not a member of the invisible church, but may be a member of the visible church, admitted according to the rules which Christ has given to his church. He is not in the kingdom of God in the sight of God, but is so in the sight of men. But he who is born of the Spirit, and is baptized, has entered into the kingdom of God, in the sight of God and man, and appears to be what he really is, and shall be saved; whereas, the other, who is born of water only, is a hypocrite, and is a member of the kingdom of God only in appearance; that is, he is a *visible* member only, and not a complete one, and has no title to salvation.

Baptism is an appointed seal of the covenant of grace, both on the part of Christ, and of him who is baptized. It is a seal of the truth of the promises of this covenant, to all who believe, and are the true friends of Christ. And he who is baptized makes this a visible seal and token of the truth of his profession, of his believing in Christ, and of his friendship to him, and his willingness to obey and serve him; so it is a visible, solemn covenant transaction between Christ and him who is baptized, by which his sins are visibly washed away and forgiven, and he is visibly entitled to all the promises of the covenant of grace, and numbered among the saved, and is really so, if his heart be answerable in any degree to his profession and this solemn transaction, as it is if he be born of the Spirit of God.

Christian baptism is not to be repeated, or administered more than once to the same person, because we have no precept or example for this in the Scripture. And there does not appear any reason for doing it; for by this, persons are introduced into the visible church of Christ, as appearing to be real members of his kingdom. And if one so baptized and introduced be afterwards rejected and cast out for his visible bad conduct, and after this profess and appear to be a true penitent, there can be no visible evidence that he was not a real Christian when he was baptized and first introduced; therefore, there is no more reason for rebaptizing him than for repeating the baptism of any other visible member of the church, and though he has been rejected, his relation to the church does not cease on supposition he shall repent; therefore, when he appears to repent, he restores himself to the same station in the visible church in which he was before.

Baptism is a public ordinance, and the church is to know who are baptized and who are not, and it is, therefore, in ordinary cases, to be administered in public. But there may be instances in which it is proper and necessary to do it more privately, of which we have examples in the days of the apostles.

There have been, and still are, different and opposite sentiments among professed believers respecting the ordinance of baptism, especially with regard to the mode of applying water in baptism, and the proper subjects of this ordinance; and many volumes have been written containing controversy on these points. And as no new light can perhaps be given now on these subjects in dispute, it is not thought needful to enter particularly into this controversy here. A few things, however, will be observed respecting these points, of the propriety and truth of which every one will judge for himself.

1. The difference and opposition in sentiment and practice respecting this institution, and all other Christian doctrines, duties, and ordinances, is not owing to any want of light and instruction in the Scriptures on these points. To suppose this, is a reproach on divine revelation, and the author of it, and an implicit denial that it comes from God. All differences of this kind are owing to something defective and wrong in man, by which he is blind to that which is clearly revealed in Scripture. This ought to encourage and excite every honest man diligently to search the Scriptures on this subject, as well as others, praying that he may not be blinded by prejudice or any wrong bias, but that his eyes may be opened to see what God has revealed. We are not to confine ourselves to one part of the Bible in neglect of others, or to conclude nothing to be revealed which we do not find asserted in express words, but all parts of Scripture are to be carefully examined, and compared together, in order to learn what is the whole revealed will of God. And whatever is the just and necessary consequence from any one or two, or more propositions or facts which are expressly asserted, is as really revealed as those propositions and facts themselves.

However we may differ now in sentiment and practice on the subject of baptism, and oppose and censure each other, when men shall be more upright, discerning, and diligent, in attending to the Bible, ready to receive with meekness what God has revealed, as they will be in the days of the millennium, all those differences will cease, and what is so much disputed now will then be seen to be clearly decided in divine revelation; all former errors will be rectified, and, doubtless, it will then be seen that we were all more or less in the wrong

on this point. We must, therefore, go to the law and the testimony; and if we think and speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us, while it shines sufficiently clear in the Bible.

2. As to the mode of baptism, and the form and manner of using and applying water in this ordinance, to the person baptized, it does not appear to be decidedly fixed in the Scripture, whether it be by plunging, pouring on water, aspersion, or sprinkling. Each of those ways have been embraced and practised by different churches, and some do insist that plunging the person wholly under water is the only scriptural mode of baptism, and that none are really baptized, who are not thus plunged. But when the Scripture is carefully examined, it will not appear that this form of baptism was instituted by Christ, or practised by the apostles; or that the word in the original, translated baptism, or to baptize, invariably signifies plunging the whole body in water. This has been particularly considered and proved over and over again, by writers on this subject. Therefore, their opinion and practice, with regard to baptism, seems to be most agreeable to Scripture, who think no particular form of applying water in baptism is prescribed there, by precept or example, or by any thing that is there said on this point; therefore, every church is left to adopt that particular mode which appears to them most decent and convenient; or that different persons may be baptized in different ways of application of water, as shall be most agreeable to them, allowing all to be really baptized, to whom water is religiously applied by a proper person, in the name of the sacred Trinity, whether by plunging, pouring on water, or by aspersion and sprinkling, as the Christian baptism does in no degree consist in the particular manner of using and applying water; and that it is as real baptism, according to the institution of Christ, when performed in different modes. And they seem to be rigid beyond any Scripture warrant, and in a degree superstitious, who insist that all shall be baptized by plunging, and reject all those to whom water has not been applied in this particular mode, as not baptized. This is doubtless making that essential to this ordinance which the Scripture has not made so, and rejecting those from Christian communion and the privileges of the visible church whom Christ receives. If they who have adopted this mode of baptism by plunging did not make it a term of communion, and exclude all as not baptized who have not had water applied to them in this particular way, and not visible Christians, the dispute and contention would be at an end, and they who think and practise differently might hold communion with each other, and

be members of the same churches, though baptized in different modes.

3. The proper subjects of baptism, if adult, are those who by profession, and in appearance, are believers in Christ, and true friends to him. None but they who are really such do in heart "put on Christ," and approve of the covenant of grace and the way of salvation by him, and devote themselves to his honor and service, which all who come to baptism profess to do, and by this transaction are admitted into the church as the servants of Christ, and are visibly interested in the blessings of the covenant of grace, and are considered as among the number of the saved, and are thus distinguished from all others, as saints, or holy persons. They must, therefore, be really holy, in order to put on this visibility and profession of it, with propriety and truth, which they do in baptism; for if they be not really such, they are utterly unqualified, in the sight of God, to be admitted to baptism, as it is, on their part, only a piece of hypocrisy. Therefore none are to be admitted to this ordinance but those who in the view of the church appear to be true friends to Christ, or believers in him, and really holy, and are justly considered by them as such, who can judge only by outward appearance, and cannot certainly know what is in the heart.

That none but such who are thus visibly, and in the charitable judgment of the church, and of those who administer this ordinance, believers in Christ, and really holy, are the proper subjects of this ordinance, and to be admitted to baptism, is abundantly evident from Scripture, as well as from the nature of the transaction, and the reason of things. The apostles, when they first began to administer Christian baptism and form a church, baptized none but such who "gladly received the word." (Acts ii. 41.) When the eunuch desired to be baptized, Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (Acts viii. 37.) This implies that he was not qualified for baptism, or a fit subject of that ordinance, unless he were a true believer in Christ; and that he could not baptize him unless he professed and appeared to be such a believer. Hence, all who were baptized and formed into churches were considered and addressed by the apostles, in their letters to them, as saints or holy persons, believers in Christ, and friends to him, as those who were saved, and heirs of eternal life; or, which is the same, as real Christians: of which every one must be sensible, who reads the Acts of the Apostles and their epistles.

INFANT BAPTISM.

Whether infants, the children of visible believers, and members of the visible church, who have been now described, are the proper subjects of baptism, is an important question, upon which professing Christians are greatly divided, and which has been the subject of much dispute in the three last centuries. It is not thought proper, or that it will answer any good end, to enter here very particularly into this dispute, upon which so much has been written on both sides. It will be sufficient briefly to state the chief arguments for the baptism of such children, and the ground and import of this ordinance, when applied to them.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

I. The arguments may be exhibited under the following particulars: —

1. It is observed from the Scripture, that God, in his dealings with men, in his constitutions and conduct, and covenants with them, does connect children with their parents, and considers the former as included in the latter; so that the children take their moral character and visible relation to God, and derive good or evil, a blessing, or the contrary, from their parents, according to *their* character and conduct.

When God first made man, he considered the children of Adam as included in him, and they were included in the covenant made with him; so that they were to be blessed or not, according to the conduct of their parent, and his moral character and conduct were to determine and fix theirs. Though there were some things peculiar in this constitution, especially as it was more general and comprehensive, taking in all the natural descendants from Adam to the end of the world, yet thus much is to be gathered from it, viz., that children may be included in the covenant which is made with their parents, so as to take their moral character from them, and derive good or evil, according to the moral conduct of their parents, and that God has actually done this in a perspicuous and most striking instance, in which he may be considered, perhaps, as setting a pattern and example of his conduct with mankind, in his public covenant transactions with them, and that in all such covenants children are to be considered as included with their parents.

When God made a covenant with Noah, after the flood, his

children and seed were included; and God's covenant with Abraham was with him, and his seed after him; and his children and posterity had favor and blessings in consequence of this covenant, and out of respect to it. "He remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness. But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." (Ps. cv. 42, 43. Isa. xli. 8. See also Gen. v. 4, 5, 24. Ex. vi. 5. Lev. xxvi. 42.) And God saved the children and posterity of David from evil, and showed them special favors for his sake, and out of respect to the covenant made with him. (1 Kings xi. 12, 13, 32, 34, 36. 2 Chron. xxi. 7. Isa. xxxvii. 35.)

From these instances it appears that God has, in fact, entered into covenant with parents, in which their children or seed were included in such a sense and degree that he has showed favor to them out of respect to such covenants, and to the parents with whom the covenant was made. When God entered into covenant with the children of Israel, on the plains of Moab, their children — even their *little ones*, or infants — are expressly included in the covenant. (Deut. xxix. 10–12.) They are said to enter into covenant with their parents. Therefore, infants and children did enter into covenant with their parents, as included with them in the solemn transaction.

Agreeably to this, God says, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." (Ex. xx. 5, 6.) Here, on the one hand, God says he brings evil on the children and posterity of wicked parents, as the consequence of their iniquity. It hence is evident that the moral character of the children of wicked parents is, by divine constitution, affected, formed, and fixed by, or in consequence of, the parents' iniquity, who are enemies to him; for God has declared that the child who does not imitate his father in his iniquity shall not suffer for his father's wickedness. (Eze. xviii. 1–20.) The words cited from the second commandment are not repeated or contradicted by this passage in Ezekiel, as some have suggested, but are explained; and hereby we learn that visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children does not intend punishing the children for the iniquity of their fathers, — whatever be the moral character and conduct of the children, and though they abhor and renounce their father's iniquity, and fear and love God, — but their moral character is supposed to be like that of their wicked father, and is necessarily implied

in the iniquity of their father being visited upon them; — that they shall not renounce, but approve of, the sins of their father, and suffer natural evil or punishment for their own disposition and conduct, and because their moral character and conduct is like their father's. Hence it appears that the moral character of the children of wicked parents is the consequence of the iniquity of their parents, and is formed by it, as the foundation of the natural evil which they suffer; and that this is meant by visiting the iniquity of the fathers, who hate God, upon their children. These fathers do hand down, and entail to their children, their iniquity, or their own moral character, as there is no other possible way in which their iniquity can be visited upon their children.

On the contrary, God shows mercy unto a thousand generations successively of them who love him and keep his commandments. This is God's covenant with such; which appears from the words of Moses, in which he has reference to the declaration and promise in the second command: "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." (Deut. vii. 9.) From these words we learn two things: —

First. That the mercy mentioned in the second command, which God exercises and shows, is *covenanted mercy*, — mercy which he has promised to them who love him and keep his commandments, who have entered into covenant with him.

Secondly. That *thousands*, in the second command, means a thousand generations, and so is a promise of mercy not only to those individual persons now on the stage of life who love God and keep his commandments, but that these, by fearing God and keeping his commandments, shall transmit and hand down mercy to the next generation, or to their children; and those children, by faithfully following their parents' steps, and keeping covenant, shall likewise procure mercy for their children of the next generation. And, in this way, unless the covenant be broken by unfaithfulness and disobedience, mercy will go down from one to another, even to a thousand generations, — that is, to all generations, — and the course can never be interrupted; and, in this respect, it is an everlasting covenant.

And that this is the meaning of the words in the second commandment is evident from the words themselves taken together; for the promise is set in opposition to the threatening. The threatening respects posterity, or children, or generations yet to come — "unto the third and fourth generation." Generation is not in the original, but is necessarily understood,

and, therefore, properly supplied by our translators. Therefore, the promise has respect to the same; and "showing mercy unto thousands" means a thousand generations, and might have been thus translated and supplied with as much reason and propriety as the foregoing clause, and agreeable to the sense Moses gives of the words in the place just cited. As evil descends from father to children to the third and fourth generation, so, on the other hand, mercy descends from parents to children to a thousand generations; — that is, to all generations without any limitation, — a certain number, or many, being mentioned for an unlimited one. The descent of evil from father to children, from generation to generation, is limited, and has an end, either by the interposition of mercy, to put a stop to the succession of evil, as it sometimes does, and so "mercy rejoices against judgment," or, by cutting off the posterity, and putting an end to the succession of evil, which is often the case. But mercy descends from parents to children, from generation to generation, without limitation or end, unless the succession be interrupted and cut off by disobedience and breach of covenant by the parents.

And as the disobedient parents transmit a bad moral character to their children by their iniquity, — this being implied in the threatening, as has been shown, — and their iniquity is, in this way, visited upon their children, so by the promise, which is opposed to the threatening, the love and obedience of the parents affect and form the moral character of their children; so that their piety and obedience do, by the promise, convey spiritual blessings to their children, which is the mercy promised and shown to the parents who love God and keep his commandments, in opposition to the judgment and evil threatened to disobedient parents. As their impiety and disobedience is, in judgment, visited on their children in the manner above explained, so, on the contrary, the piety and obedience of them who love God and keep his commandments is, in mercy, visited upon their children, transmitting a good moral character to them, and all those blessings which are implied in this; and thus, as the Psalmist declares, "the generation of the upright shall be blessed; his seed shall be mighty upon the earth." (Ps. cxii. 2.)

All that is to be inferred from this passage at present, — though further use may be made of it before this subject is finished, — and from those mentioned before under this particular, is, that God, in his transactions and covenanting with men, does include children with their parents, and they are so connected together that children derive their moral character, at least in many instances, from their parents; and God, in

entering into covenant with parents, extends the promises and blessings of his covenant to their children, which are suspended on the character and conduct of their parents on their fulfilling the covenant on their part, or not. It is presumed this is undeniably certain from the passages of Scripture which have been here cited.

As this has, in fact, been the way of God's dealing with mankind, and this is declared to be his method of conduct and the tenor of his covenanting with his people in the second command, — not as a temporary, but a perpetual rule of his proceeding and covenanting with man, — and this appears rational and natural, no reason can be suggested why it should not take place under the gospel to as great a degree, if not greater, in God's covenanting with Christians; but this gives good reason to conclude, with great certainty, that this is the way in which God deals with Christians and Christian churches universally, and that his covenant with them includes their children also.

This is thought to be one good and strong argument for the baptism of children of parents who are visible believers, and are in covenant with God, and members of a Christian church. Since the covenant has respect to their children as well as to them, and the children are really included in it, this is a good reason why the seal of the covenant should be applied to them, as well as to their parents; therefore, they are proper subjects of baptism.

2. That the above reasoning is right and conclusive, from the facts and declarations recorded in Scripture, which have been mentioned; that the children of those who enter into covenant are proper subjects of the seal of the covenant, and have an equal right to it with their parents, is confirmed by the express direction and command of God to administer and affix the seal of his covenant to the children, as well as to their parents. Of this there is indisputable evidence, both from precept and from fact.

When God entered into covenant with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers to the end of the world, and formed a visible church in his house and family, and appointed circumcision to be a token and seal of the covenant, his children, and all the children in his family, were included in the covenant, and by an express direction and command were to be circumcised at eight days old. And this was the seal of the covenant between God and the seed and posterity of Abraham, and all who were proselyted and joined with them, by which they were visibly in covenant, and distinguished from others, and was constantly applied to children, from Abraham

down to the Christian dispensation, and till the rite of circumcision was expressly set aside and abolished in the church, and another rite appointed in the place of it by divine authority, which is baptism with water. And the circumcision of infants was so strictly enjoined, and made so important and necessary, in order to continue and maintain a visible church, that when a parent neglected to circumcise his children, the covenant was broken with respect to the children and the parent, and they were cut off from the church. (Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 14. Ex. iv. 24–26; xii. 48.)

The Abrahamic covenant, and that into which the children of Israel entered, which is in substance the same, included the promise of spiritual blessings, even all the good things which are contained in the covenant of grace, which takes place between God and the visible churches of Christ, and every individual believer; and the latter is the same with the former, in the essence and substance of it. Nothing greater or more is promised to man in the Bible, nor can more be promised by God than that he will be a God unto them. This promise was contained in the covenant made with Abraham and his seed. (Gen. xvii.) And this promise contains all the blessings of the gospel covenant, or the new covenant, called so to distinguish it from the covenant published from Mount Sinai, in the form of a covenant of works, which did, however, under that form, more darkly contain the covenant of grace. (Jer. xxxi. 31–34. Ezek. xxxvii. 27. Heb. viii. 10. Rev. xxi. 7.) And nothing more is to be promised, on man's part, than to *keep this covenant*, which was enjoined upon Abraham and his seed. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt *keep my covenant* therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations." (Gen. xvii. 9.) To enter into covenant with God, and acknowledge and receive him as their God, is to engage to do all the duty enjoined in the covenant which is necessary in order to partake of the promises; to love God and keep his commandments; which is expressed to Abraham in the following words: "The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; *walk before me, and be thou perfect.*" (Verse 1.)

This covenant did, indeed, contain a promise of temporal blessings, and of possessing the land of Canaan; but this does not make it essentially different from the covenant under the gospel; for this contains a promise of temporal good things, which shall be proper and needed. It has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

Therefore, the token or seal of this covenant, on the part of those to whom it was applied, signified a new heart, a heart

to love God, a humble, penitent, obedient heart. And a heart opposite to all this is called an uncircumcised heart. "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." (Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6.) "If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled." (Lev. xxvi. 41.) "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." (Acts vii. 51.) "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and *circumcision is that of the heart*, in the spirit, and not in the letter." (Rom. ii. 29.) Circumcision, therefore, implied, and did signify as much, and the same thing, as baptism does, when applied to the adult or any other person.

The argument from this fact and divine constitution is stated in the following manner: When God formed a church in the family of Abraham, and in Israel his posterity, upon the same foundation and covenant, as to substance, with that upon which the church, under the gospel, is founded, requiring the same character in order to be members of it, and containing the same mutual promises and engagements, and appointed a token or seal of this covenant, by the application of which persons were introduced as visible members of this church, and were distinguished from all others as a visibly holy people; he did, at the same time, order this distinguishing seal of the covenant to be applied and administered to their children, and they were taken into covenant with their parents. The children of parents in the Christian church are as capable of being included in the covenant with their parents, and of having the qualifications for baptism, and the things signified by it, as the infants of Abraham and his posterity were of being included in the covenant made with them, and of having the qualifications and those things which were signified by circumcision, these being in substance the same, there being no other alteration or change but that which is circumstantial, and the ancient initiating rite and seal of the covenant changed from circumcision to baptism with water, which is the Christian circumcision. Therefore, the children of believers in the Christian church are included in the covenant into which the parents enter, and are to have the initiating seal of the covenant applied to them, as being the proper subjects of baptism. And the divine command to Abraham and his posterity to circumcise their children is as binding on Christians, who are the children of Abraham, to baptize their

children, unless this command and institution of God be expressly or clearly, by necessary implication, repealed and set aside; which is not to be found in the Bible, nor the least intimation of any such thing, but the contrary, as will be shown under the next particular. It was a favor and privilege to both parents and children, in the Abrahamic church, to have the latter admitted into covenant with their parents, and to have the seal of the covenant applied to them; and no reason can be given or thought of, why it is not as great a favor and privilege to both now, as it was then: no man, therefore, can set this divine institution aside, unless he have a warrant from heaven to do it, without disobedience to God, and injuring the church of Christ, and offending those little children, the children of believing parents.

God, by instituting a church in the family of Abraham, set a pattern, and appointed a form of a church, in all the essentials of it, agreeable to his own wisdom and goodness, in which he included both parents and their children, and ordered the initiating seal of the covenant to be applied to infants, hereby declaring them to be the proper subjects of it. This was a great favor and privilege to parents and children, and was, therefore, strictly enjoined, and much insisted upon as an important duty, the neglect of which brought the parents under censure, and excluded them from the privilege of the church, and injured the children. Therefore, this institution continues, and is binding on the Christian church, and will continue to the end of the world, and there is no reason to expect or desire that it should be set aside, and be made to cease, or that it should be expressly enjoined again, and the command renewed under the gospel, because this is wholly needless; it having been once expressly enjoined, and actually put into practice, a total silence about it afterwards is a tacit command to continue the observance of it.*

3. It has been just now observed, that if nothing be recorded in the New Testament that was said or done by Christ or his apostles, contrary to including the children of believers in the

* They who are expecting and demanding that Christ or his apostles should expressly renew and enjoin on Christians the appointment and command of God to apply to the infants of believers the initiating seal of the covenant, in order to warrant men to do it, refusing to acquiesce in the decision of this point, which God had already made, *if the argument above be conclusive*, are imitating Balaam, who did not rest satisfied with the decision which God had once made, respecting his going to curse Israel, but expected and required that God should speak again, if he did really forbid his doing it; and are acting as the scribes and Pharisees did, who demanded a sign from heaven to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, while they disregarded all the signs and the abundant evidence which had been given to confirm this truth.

covenant with their parents and baptizing them, then the constitution which God had already made in his church with respect to this must stand unrepealed; and it may be safely concluded, that it is the will of Christ that this should take place in his church, and that it actually did take place, and was practised, though nothing be said directly concerning it. But it must be now observed, that there are things said in the New Testament which do imply this, and show that the children of believers were then considered in the same light and character, and treated as the children were in the Abrahamic church.

What Christ said of little children and infants, and did to them which were brought to him for his blessing, is remarkable. The disciples rebuked those who brought them for doing it; but Christ was much displeased with them for doing so, and said to them, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And he took them in his arms, and laid his hands on them, and prayed for them, and blessed them. (Matt. xix. 13–15. Mark x. 13, 14. Luke xviii. 15, 16.) Upon this the following things are to be observed: —

1. They who brought those children and infants to Christ were believers in him, and friends to him, for none but such would in these circumstances bring their children to him, to obtain his blessing.

2. They were not brought to Christ to be cured of any bodily disease: for if this had been the case, and the children had need of healing in this sense, the disciples would not have rebuked them for bringing them to be healed; besides, there is not a word said, intimating that they were cured of any bodily disorder, or that they had any.

3. Christ encouraged their bringing their little children and infants to him, and discovered his approbation, by showing his displeasure with his disciples for discouraging and forbidding them to do it, and charging them not to do so again, and by granting the request of those who brought them.

4. Christ, by taking them in his arms, and praying for them and blessing them, declared that they were capable of receiving spiritual saving blessings; of being the subjects of all the blessings contained in the covenant of grace, and of all that is signified in the ordinance of baptism; and that he actually fixed this character upon them, and conferred these blessings, and numbered them among the saved, those who are redeemed by him. For his praying for them, and blessing them, must imply all this, as he was always heard, and they whom Christ blesses are blessed, and shall be blessed forever.

5. When Christ says, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven," he, in these words, gives the reason why little children should be brought to him for his blessing. By the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, which is the same, is meant the visible kingdom of Christ in this world, or his church; in which sense, this phrase is most commonly used by Christ. What he here declares, therefore, is, that such children as these — that is, the children of his friends, who believe in him — belong to his kingdom, and are to be members of his visible church, and to be with their parents numbered among the redeemed.

This declaration of our Savior sets the children of believing parents under the gospel in the same situation in which the children of the visible members of the ancient church, in the family and posterity of Abraham, were placed. Such were introduced with their parents into that church and kingdom, and were as real members of it as their parents. But they cannot enter into this kingdom of God, the visible church of Christ, in any way but by being baptized with water; therefore, this is as proper, important, and necessary, as was the circumcision of children, under the covenant made with Abraham. If children of visible believers are to be considered as having a right to be visible members of the kingdom of God, and to be treated as such, in which light Christ has set them in those words, then they are to be introduced to this visible standing in this church and kingdom, by the only door which Christ has fixed and opened for this, which is, by being baptized with water, in the name of the sacred Trinity; or being born of water.

In sum, what Christ said and did on this occasion is entirely conformable to the institution in the covenant with Abraham, and the practice of the church of Israel respecting children; and is really an approbation of it, and a manifestation of his will, that the children of his disciples, and members of his visible church, should be considered and treated as the children of Abraham and his posterity were, as being in the same covenant and kingdom with their parents.

What the apostle Paul says to the church of Christ at Corinth, and particular members of it, respecting their children, is an evidence that they had the same station and character in the Christian church which they had in the church before the incarnation of Christ. "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 14.)

Here it is asserted, that the children of believing parents, even if one of them be a believer, are *holy*. The meaning of the word holy, here, is doubtless plain and determinate, and

will appear so, when properly considered and compared with other parts of the Bible. Is it not certain that this word, especially in the New Testament, when applied to a moral agent, denotes a moral character, and means real holiness, or the appearance of real holiness, in the view and judgment of those persons who are to form a judgment of their moral character, and treat them accordingly? This is the same with *visible holiness;* that is, real holiness in the sight and judgment of men, who are to judge and act upon it. To be visibly holy, is to be really holy in appearance to men, so far as they can, or have a right to judge; and is a sufficient warrant for them to consider and treat them who have this visibility of real holiness, as if they were in fact really holy, though this visibility, or the signs and evidence by which they are to judge, be not infallibly connected with real holiness.

In this sense, all the members of the apostolic churches were holy. They were, therefore, called "holy brethren," and SAINTS, which is the same word in the original, by which the character of children of believers is here expressed, and might be translated, "Else were your children unclean; but now are they *saints.*" This is an epithet common to all who were baptized and received into the churches, professing faith in Christ, and entering into covenant with him and with each other, to obey his laws, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were thus called saints, or holy, and considered and treated as being really such, because they had that appearance in the sight of men, according to the rules by which they were to judge and act in their treatment of them, and not because they infallibly knew they were real saints. They were visibly real saints, according to the marks and evidence, and the appearance they made in the sight of men, by which Christ had ordered them to judge and act. Thus they were *visible saints.* All the members of every church were so. They were baptized and received as members of the church, as appearing to be real saints, which is meant by a *visible saint.* All who were not real saints, or really holy in the sight of Christ, which was true of some, were hypocrites, and not what they professed and appeared to men to be. In this case the fault was wholly in them, who made an appearance and profession not agreeable to the truth; and not theirs who acted according to the rules which Christ has prescribed, in forming a charitable judgment of them, and receiving them as being really holy, and friends to Christ.

In this sense, the children of the believer are holy, or saints. Christ has put this character upon them, and directed his people to consider and receive them as such; which character

is derived wholly from the believing parent. If the parent of the children be a visible saint, or holy person, that is, appears to men to be a real saint, the children are visible saints, or holy, also; that is, they have the appearance and character of real saints, as really as their parents, and are to be treated as such until this appearance ceases. How this appearance and visibility may cease, and on what ground it is derived to children from their parents, will be more particularly considered in the sequel.

It has been said that the unbelieving parent is sanctified, according to this text, which is the same with being made holy. Such parent is, therefore, here represented to be as holy as the children; consequently the latter are no more, and in no other sense, holy than the former, according to these words.

Answer. No one can suppose that to be sanctified, and to be holy, do here express the same character, or that the unbelieving parent is asserted to be holy in precisely the same sense in which the children of believers are holy. Therefore, the unbelieving parent being said to be sanctified by, in, or to, the believing parent, whatever this may mean, does not in the least determine what is the character of the children, which is expressed by their being called holy, and is as consistent with their being asserted to be really holy, in the sense which has been now explained, as it is with their being holy in any other sense. And it is to be considered whether the sense here given be not the most natural, consistent sense, and whether any other sense, which is consistent and unforced, has ever yet been mentioned, or can be suggested.

When the unbelieving parent is said to be sanctified by, or to, the believer, the meaning is plain and easy, viz., that the believer may live in such a connection, consistent with maintaining a Christian character, and the unbeliever may, to such a degree, answer the ends of that relation to the believer, as to be improved by the latter to the holy purposes of true religion. Thus the unbeliever is sanctified to the believer, as every kind of food and every creature of God is sanctified to such, by the word of God and prayer. (1 Tim. iv. 5.) Therefore, the children of such parents are holy; they derive their character from the believing, holy parent, and not from the unbeliever; which could not be the case if the unbeliever were not sanctified by, or to, the believer, in the sense above explained. Who does not see the difference between the unbeliever being sanctified by, in, or to, the believer, and the children of the believer being consequently holy? The latter, according to the use of the word in the New Testament, denotes a moral character, and fixes it on the children; the former has no respect to the moral

character of the unbeliever, but of the believing parent, from whom that of the children is derived.

According to this view of the words under consideration, the children of believers and members of Christian churches are to be considered, and were considered, by Christ and his apostles and the primitive churches, as having the same character with their believing parents, — just as the children of parents in the Abrahamic church were considered and treated, viz., as being in the same covenant, and having the same character, with their parents. The children of Abraham and of Israel, when more particularly formed into a church, — and they renewed and entered into covenant at Mount Sinai, after they had greatly apostatized during their long servitude in Egypt, — were denominated, by God, "a holy nation, and a holy people;" and all their children were included in this covenant, as has been shown, and this epithet was applied to them as much as to their parents. The seal of the covenant was, therefore, applied to them, by which they were visibly separated and distinguished from all other people as a holy nation, both parents and children.

Is not this sufficient evidence that it was the will of Christ that the churches erected by the apostles should make no alteration with respect to children, from that which took place in the church formed in the family of Abraham, but they are to have the same character and privileges with them? How contrary is this to a supposed repeal of the institution by which children were received into covenant with their parents, and had the seal of it applied to them, in the family of Abraham!

And if the children of believers be holy, in the sense explained, and were so in the apostolic churches, are they not the proper subjects of baptism? Who can forbid water that they should not be baptized?

It may be added, that, consistent with these words thus understood, this apostle treated and addressed the children of believing parents as being numbered with the saints, and so as saints. He addresses his epistle to the church at Ephesus, and to that at Colosse, to the *saints* at Ephesus, and at Colosse, and to no other persons; and he speaks to such, and no others, in those, and in all his epistles. Yet here we find him particularly addressing and exhorting children, as included in the church, and among the saints: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." (Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20.)

Other passages in the New Testament have been often

mentioned by writers on this subject, in support of the baptism of the children of believers; but it is not thought needful particularly to consider them here, since these which have been brought into view are supposed sufficient to show that it is the will of Christ that the institution of a church in the family of Abraham, so far as it respects children, including them with their parents and applying the seal of the covenant to them, should not be repealed under the gospel.

4. That the apostolic churches and primitive Christians did admit their children to baptism, as proper subjects of it, is argued from the general and almost universal practice of it, in all ages since from that time. This is a fact which writers on this subject have abundantly proved. From writings now extant, it appears that infant baptism was practised in the Christian churches in the second, third, and fourth centuries; and it was asserted, by writers in the church in those ages, that it had been the universal practice from the days of the apostles, and not one person appears to have denied it, or to suggest that it was not thus handed down as an institution of Christ; and it appears to have been the common practice in Christian churches for above a thousand years, at least, and it is, to this day, the general practice in the Christian world. If this were not the practice of the first Christian churches, formed by the apostles, it seems impossible that it should be introduced at so early an age, as the universal practice, without opposition by any one church or person as an innovation, and contrary to the practice of the primitive churches, and without any account or notice given when it was done, and by whom, and by whom it was opposed. Various heresies took place in the churches, soon after the apostles' days, by which Christians were divided in their sentiments and practice in many things, of which we have the history handed down to us, informed when and by whom they were introduced. And learned men, — who took pains to inform themselves, and were under advantages to do it, — who lived in the early ages of the church, have given a particular account of the heresies which had arisen among Christians in different parts of the world, and at different times; but they never mention infant baptism as one of them, nor the omission or denial of it, as a Christian institution, by any church or single person who practised the baptism of any with water. By those heresies, professing Christians were divided into parties, and became spies upon each other; and if they had not all been agreed in baptizing infants, and it had not been the universal practice before those divisions rose, but was introduced afterwards, it would have been impossible that they should all agree in it,

or that they should be silent about it, and that none should dispute against it and oppose it. If one party had adopted it, the other would oppose it as an innovation, never known to be practised before, etc. But while they differed about many things, in this practice they were all agreed, as an institution handed down from the apostles.

Corruptions and practices have taken place in churches, especially in the church of Rome, which are contrary to the institutions of Christ, and were not practised by the primitive churches; but we have an account when most of those were introduced, and of great opposition made to them by many, and they have never been universally received by the churches. If the baptism of children be not a divine institution, it is a great error indeed, a great corruption and abuse of the ordinance of baptism, and an utter perversion of it to a purpose for which it was not instituted. And it is perfectly unaccountable (and may we not say impossible?) that it should so universally take place in the church of Christ, and that so soon after the death of the apostles, without any opposition by any one person, for many centuries, and no account be handed down of the time when it was introduced, and by whom, if it were not universally practised from the days of the apostles, but is an innovation, contrary to the original institution and practice of the churches?

But if the baptism of the children of believers be a divine institution, and universally practised by the churches in the apostles' days, agreeably to the foregoing arguments, and was handed down from them in the Christian churches, then its taking place so generally, and even universally, from the earliest times, for so many ages, can be well accounted for, and appears perfectly consistent. This fact, therefore, increases the evidence, and serves to strengthen and confirm other arguments, which are thought to be in themselves fully conclusive, that the baptism of infants is a divine institution, and was practised by the apostolic churches.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF INFANT BAPTISM.

II. The next thing proposed on the subject of infant baptism is, to consider the import and design of it, and what good ends it may answer to the parents and their children.

If it be evident and certain that this is a divine institution, it ought to be punctually attended and practised, though the reason, design, and end of it were not to be discovered, and none could tell or see of what benefit it can be to the parents

or children. But if this were in fact the case, and it should appear to us only an unmeaning, useless ceremony, and really of a bad tendency, this would greatly tend to blind us to the evidence that it is indeed an institution of Christ, and to prejudice our minds, and shut our eyes, so as not to see it, however clear it may be. It is, therefore, no wonder that persons who have imbibed this notion of infant baptism, and look into the Bible, and attend to the arguments which are brought in favor of it, and what is said against it, with this prejudice on their minds, should not be convinced that it is a divine institution, but reject it with a great degree of confidence and religious zeal. In this view, the inquiry now before us is very important and interesting. And if a rational and consistent account can be given of this institution, and the ground and design of it be discovered by the help of the Scripture, and it can be shown in what respect it is suited to promote the good of parents and their children, and of the church, it will tend to remove prejudices, and to confirm the arguments which have been offered from the Scripture in favor of infant baptism.

This will now be attempted by offering the following observations and conclusions to the candid consideration and careful examination of those who are willing to attend to this subject, and desirous to form right conceptions of it, and to know what is the reason, design, and advantage of this institution.

1. The baptism of the children of believers is a *covenant transaction*, by which, in some sense or other, and in some degree, at least, the children are visibly taken into covenant, so as to be included in it, and are to be considered as sharing in the blessings of it with their parents. No less than this can be made of the transaction with Abraham, and the covenant made with him and his seed, in which the seal of the covenant was applied to them. And the same constitution takes place in the Christian church with respect to children, and the appointed seal of the gospel covenant is therefore applied to them. If this were not a covenant transaction which has respect to the children, and they were in no sense included in the covenant, the application of the seal of the covenant to them, by baptizing them, would be an unmeaning transaction indeed, or, rather, would be a signification of that which is not true, and does not really take place. Nor would it answer to what was intended and actually took place in the circumcision of children in the Abrahamic church, which was expressly called the token of the covenant, and the covenant itself, which God made and established between himself and Abraham and his seed. "I will make a covenant between

me and thee; and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man child among you shall be circumcised, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. xvii.) What can be more plain and certain than those words make it, that the children of Abraham were as really included in the covenant made with him, of which circumcision was the appointed token and seal, as he himself was, and, consequently, that all the parents in Israel and their circumcised children were equally included in the same covenant? And who that believes in infant baptism will deny that this is as much a covenant transaction as was the circumcision of the children of Abraham, and that the baptized children of believers are as really and as much in covenant as the circumcised children of Abraham? Therefore, they who believe the baptism of infants to be a Christian institution have generally, if not universally, considered it as a covenant transaction, importing the children of believers to be included in the same covenant with their believing parents, though they may have differed in their notion of this covenant, as it respects children.

2. This covenant transaction in baptizing the children of believers, is between God and the parents. It respects the children, indeed, which are baptized, but they are incapable of acting in the affair, so as to enter into covenant by any act of theirs. If they be brought into covenant, and the seal of it set upon them, it must be by what is done for them, and determined and acted with respect to them, in which they are the subjects, and not the agents; and all this takes place previous to their knowing any thing of the matter. In this all are agreed.

3. A covenant is commonly understood to imply mutual engagements and promises, on some condition expressed or understood between two parties so covenanting. Thus, when God enters into covenant with men, or a covenant takes place between them, he proposes and promises to grant some good thing to them on some condition to be performed on their part, which they engage and promise to perform, approving of the proposal and complying with it. But the condition on which the divine promises are made in the covenant which he proposes, and into which he enters with man, is all implied in a cordial approbation of the promise, and acceptance of the

thing promised, and perseverance in this, and expressing it in a proper and answerable conduct; for this is to love God and keep his commandments.

The absolute, unconditional promises of God are, indeed, called a covenant, and he is said to make a covenant with those to whom he makes such promises. Thus he is said to establish his covenant with Noah and his seed, in which all mankind who were to exist after that are comprehended, and with every living creature, (Gen. ix. 3, etc.;) which covenant consisted in an absolute, unconditional promise that he would not destroy the world again by a flood. Of the same kind are many of the promises made to the church; that God will never forsake it, but that it shall continue to the end of the world, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it, and that it shall yet prosper and flourish, and fill the world, etc.

The covenant of grace, which is called the new covenant, is, in a sense, unconditional. As it is established with the redeemed, the church as a body, it is called a promise and testament, in which are contained all the good things which are implied in the complete, eternal redemption of the redeemed church; and whatever is necessary on their part, is comprised in the promise, in which God engages that it shall take place and be wrought in them, so that they shall will and do the things necessary to their being in covenant with God, and sharing in all the blessings of it. This is evident from the particular description which the apostle Paul gives of this covenant, in a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. viii. 8, 10–12.) Here God promises to do all that is to be done; and if there be any condition necessary on the part of the church, it is included in the promise, and God engages that it shall take place. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and they shall be to me a people." This is to be considered as a condition which must take place in all of the redeemed church, and implies saving faith, or love to God, and obedience to him in keeping his commandments. But in this covenant of

grace, this condition of salvation, and all that is implied in eternal redemption, is promised to the church. This is the legacy, the testament, or promise which Christ has left to his church.

But this does not exclude, but necessarily includes, a condition, or something which must take place in every individual, in order to his being interested in the blessings of this covenant, or being properly in covenant with God. This may properly be called a condition, the condition of the covenant, on man's part, as necessary in order to his being in covenant.

How the children of believers are visibly included in this covenant, and may really be so, having the condition of it wrought in them, will be shown in what follows. But the observation in this particular, under which some digression has been made that it might not be misunderstood, is, that in the covenant transaction between God and the parents in the baptism of their children, there are mutually promises and engagements between them, which do particularly respect the children. What they are, will be considered under the following particulars: —

4. The parent who offers his child to baptism, does expressly or implicitly renew his covenant with God, and dedicates himself to him, to love him and keep his commandments, and does renewedly lay hold of the covenant, acting for himself and child. He brings his child to Christ for his blessing, and dedicates and gives it away to him, and promises to bring it up for him "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," as one of Christ's children. All this is professed and promised in this visible, external transaction; and if this be done understandingly and heartily, or is a true expression of the heart of the parent, it is really done in the sight of God. This is true, in the view of the church, who look only on the outward appearance, and cannot see the heart. The parent is considered by them as sincere and hearty in making his profession and promises, that he does really dedicate his child to Christ, and will do all that is implied in bringing it up for him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What is implied in this engagement and promise will be more particularly considered hereafter. Whatever this may be, all who believe the baptism of the children of believing parents is a divine institution, will grant that all which has been now expressed, is implied in the profession and promise made by the parent in offering his child in baptism.

5. Jesus Christ does, in this transaction, receive the child into the same visible standing and character with the parent, as a visible saint or holy person, and orders the church to con-

sider and look upon it in this light, as being one in their view, and so far as they are to judge, really holy, and among the number of the saved. Of this holiness the child is as capable as the parent; and by the command of Christ, who has put this character upon all such children, and said, *they are holy*, they are to be considered and received by the church as such; that is, in appearance, to their view, really holy. He has commanded his church to receive all those adult persons who make a proper profession and appearance of real holiness, and to look upon them as being really holy; that is, to consider and treat them as being really what they appear to be, though they may not, in fact, be really what they appear to men to be; though they may not be really holy, and there be no reason to believe that they are all such; and how great the number is of those who are visible saints, that is, who appear to the church to be real saints, and whom they are commanded to receive and treat as such, and yet are not really saints, none can tell. In like manner, he has commanded his people to receive their children, whom they bring to the church, in the same character with their parents, as really holy; that is, as appearing to them to be really holy, which is the same with being visibly holy, because he has put this character upon them, which he has put upon their parents, and ordered them to be called saints, or holy, though they may not be really so; and there may be as many, among such children, not really holy, as there are among their parents, or the adult members of the church, or more. Their connection with their parents, and having the same character put upon them by Christ, by saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," and calling them saints, or holy, is a good warrant to the church to receive them, with their parents, into the visible, holy covenant, and apply the seal of the covenant to them, as the children of the parents of the ancient church were, and were called holy, and the holy seed.

Two reasons may be given why the Redeemer has affixed the same character to the children of believing, visibly covenanting parents, as he has to the parents themselves, and ordered them to be taken into the same covenant, and to have the seal of the covenant applied to them, and to be numbered among the redeemed, both in his ancient church and in that under the gospel.

1. Because he has ordered that those who are made really holy, and are saved, should be chiefly taken from, and found among, visible believers and their children. Therefore, he has directed us to look there for really holy persons that shall be

saved, and no where else. He has, for wise reasons, determined that real holiness and salvation shall briefly and ordinarily descend in this line from believing parents to their children. Therefore, he has ordered them all to be looked upon by the church to be holy, and to be numbered among the saved, for the same reason that all adult professing believers are to be received by the church as really holy, viz., because they who are really holy and shall be saved are to be found among those who have this appearance, and are to be looked for among them; and one cannot be distinguished from another, so as to be known to be really holy, and the other not; therefore, all such must be considered as really holy, and have this character put upon them.

That it is God's common way, to convey saving blessings down from godly parents to their children, and to bless the children for the sake of their parents, may be argued from many passages of Scripture, some of which have been mentioned heretofore. "The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed." (Ps. xxxvii. 26; cxii. 1, 2. Pr. xx. 7.) God promises his church, which has a special respect to the gospel church, that he will bless them and their children with spiritual blessings, and the promise is made as much to their offspring as to them. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty; and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." (Isa. xliv. 3.) And still speaking of the church, he says, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." (Isa. lix. 21; lxv. 23.) "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." (Jer. xxxii. 38, 39.) Thus the children are connected with their parents, and the good, the blessing, is represented as descending from parents to children, and the latter are included in the promises of good to the former. To the same purpose are the following words, which have reference to the gospel day: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise

thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." (Deut. xxx. 6.) And the covenant which God makes with his church and people is represented as conveying blessings from parents to children to a thousand generations. (Ex. xx. 6. Deut. vii. 9.) Thus piety and spiritual blessings are represented as descending down in a line from parents to children, in the church, and there we are to look and expect to find holiness, if any where; and the children of visibly pious, holy parents are to be considered and looked upon as of the same character with their parents, and as the blessed of the Lord, and holy with them, so long as they do not discover the contrary. Therefore, they are to be considered and treated as in the same covenant with their parents, and heirs of the same blessings with them, so long as they are incapable of acting for themselves, which cannot be done without applying the seal of the covenant to them by baptizing them.

Agreeably to the representation of Scripture, which has now been brought into view, this appears to be true, in fact, from what has taken place in the visible church in all ages. Ever since there has been a visible church in the world, those who have been saved have generally been members of that, and this salvation has been handed down from parents to children, until, by apostasy and open breach of covenant, they have been destroyed, or cast off by God, and ceased to be a visible church. When the church was erected in the family of Abraham, and was enlarged as his posterity multiplied, — which continued down to the crucifixion of Christ, and even to the destruction of the temple and nation of the Jews by the Romans, before it was wholly abandoned and destroyed, — true religion, real holiness, and salvation were chiefly confined to that church, and handed down from parents to children. The most of the truly pious and holy people in the world were to be found in that church, during all that time, from generation to generation. This church was, therefore, called the inheritance of the Lord, and his heritage, and is represented by the apostle Paul by an olive-tree, which had flourished a long time a holy tree; but, when the branches were broken off by unbelief, and an open breach of covenant, the Gentiles were inserted in their place into the holy root of this olive-tree, and then the Gentile and Christian church — being, in the foundation and essence of it, the same with the church which had subsisted in the family and posterity of Abraham — was the visible, holy society, including parents and children. And as Christ says salvation was of the Jews, while they continued branches in the holy olive-tree, so, when they were

broken off as a nation, and agreeable to the ancient prediction, the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, unto the Gentile nations; and many people heard, and said, "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isa. ii. 3.) From that time, salvation was of the Christian church, and has been handed down from parents to children to this day. And though some particular churches, or branches of the Christian visible church, and however many and great, have been broken off by apostasy, yet still the true visible Christian church subsists, and will continue from parents to children to the end of the world; and the parents and children of which it consists are visibly holy, and heirs of salvation, and no others are or can be so.

2. Another reason why the same character is affixed to the children of believers, which the latter sustain, and why they are received into covenant with them, and have the seal of the covenant applied to them, — and which may be considered as the foundation of what is observed as a reason of this, in the foregoing particular, — is this: *that real holiness and salvation are secured to the children of believers, by the covenant into which the parents enter with God as it respects their children, if the parents faithfully keep covenant, and fulfil what they profess and promise respecting their children, when they offer them in baptism.*

It has been observed that parents' offering their children in baptism is a covenant transaction between God and them, with regard to the children to whom the seal of the covenant is administered, and that there are mutual promises and engagements between the parties covenanting, without which it would not be a covenant transaction; and it has been also observed that the baptism of children has been generally considered in this light by those who have believed it to be a divine institution, and have vindicated it as such. The parent, in this transaction, professes to devote his child to Christ, and give it away to him, asking his blessing on it as the greatest and only portion he wishes for his child, and promises, that if he and the child shall live, to bring it up for Christ as belonging to him, as one of his lambs in his flock, and bearing his mark and name — to train it up in the way in which he should go, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And Jesus Christ, as the other party in this covenant transaction, visibly receives the child as belonging to him; and on the condition which the parent professes, and promises to perform, he promises to bless the child, and bestow salvation

upon it. Therefore, such children are visibly saints, and numbered among the saved; for the profession and engagements of the parents are to be relied upon by the church, and that they will fulfil their promises respecting their children, upon which the promise of Christ will be made good to them.

That this is the tenor of the covenant between God and believing parents, respecting their children, seems to be evident from the transaction itself in baptism, as it has been now stated and explained, and this will fully account for the children of believers belonging to the visible kingdom of God, and their being called holy, or saints. But this may be further confirmed by those passages of Scripture which contain promises of saving grace, or of salvation, to the children of those parents who are faithful in keeping covenant with God.

The covenant with Abraham which has been mentioned, by which a visible church was formed in his house and family who is the father and pattern of all believers, — and which covenant and church was handed down in his posterity, and is not essentially different, but really the same covenant and church which still exists since the natural posterity of Abraham have been broken off or cast out by their unbelief and open breach of covenant, as has been shown, — this covenant with Abraham included his children, and the promise it contained was made as much to his children as to him. The words of the promise are, "to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." The promise to be a God unto Abraham included the blessings of the covenant of grace, even saving mercies, and it must imply the same when made to his seed. This promise was made on a condition on Abraham's part, which is implied, and is expressed in the context: "The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Walk before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee." (Gen. xvii. 1, 2.) The condition of the covenant, which was required of Abraham, is here expressed in these words: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." And the condition of the covenant, or promise, is again expressed in the following words: "This is my covenant, *which ye shall keep*, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." (Gen. xvii. 10, 11.) The external rite of circumcision is not here intended as the only condition of the covenant, but this implies the things signified by circumcision, — the sign being mentioned as including what was the import and signification of it. Therefore, it is here called the *token* of the covenant. When Abraham circumcised his chil-

dren, he devoted them to God, and promised to treat them as God's children, and educate them for God, which implied praying for them and with them, instructing them in the things of this covenant, and directing and watching over them, and exercising parental care and government of them, and using all proper means to lead them to know and do their duty to God and man, as soon as they should be capable of acting for themselves, at the same time setting a good example before them in all his conduct, both of true piety towards God, and righteousness and benevolence towards men. This was the covenant between God and Abraham, on Abraham's part, with respect to his children, of which circumcision was the sign, token, and seal; and though he circumcised his children, if he did not in heart dedicate them to God, and faithfully perform the duties signified and promised in this transaction, he did not keep the covenant of circumcision, but would break it in the most important and essential part of it. Upon this condition, implied, professed, and engaged, in Abraham's circumcising his children, God promised to be their God, to bless them with the blessings of the covenant, or that they should be holy and happy forever. Thus God entered into covenant with Abraham and with his seed; and the promise was to him and his children, upon condition he would keep the covenant of circumcision, which was a token and seal of the covenant, by both the parties covenanting.

This is here said to be an *everlasting covenant*. "And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." (Gen. xvii. 13.) True religion and salvation would be transmitted to a thousand generations, even without end, or to the end of the world, from parents to children, if parents were faithful in the covenant, as it respects their children. But this covenant may be broken by the parent's not keeping covenant, and not acting up to his obligations, profession, and promises, with regard to his children, and being guilty of great and persevering neglect of his duty, and by his unfaithfulness. This is evident from the words which follow, and is plainly expressed in them. "And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. x. 14.) Upon these words the following observations may be made: —

First. In the case mentioned, the child does not properly break the covenant; for he is not in the least active or guilty in the affair. The covenant is broken by the parent's neglect of his duty to the child. Therefore, when it is said, "he hath broken my covenant," the meaning is, the covenant is broken

as it respects the child, and by this means the child is out of covenant, and excluded from the privileges of it; but the parent is the covenant-breaker, as it is wholly by his neglect to circumcise his child.

Secondly. As the covenant made with Abraham was visibly broken by a parent's refusing or neglecting to circumcise his children; so it was really broken by the parent if he refused and neglected to do what is implied in the circumcision of children, and what he professed and promised in that transaction. Though he performed the external rite, yet if his heart were not answerable to it, and he were disposed to neglect all the important duty respecting his children, which he professes and solemnly engages, in performing the external rite of circumcision, he breaks the covenant as much, and more, in the sight of God, than if he had not circumcised his children, and forfeits all the promised blessings of the covenant to his children which were promised on condition of his faithfulness in keeping this covenant. Circumcision, considered as a mere external rite and ceremony, was not the circumcision which was commanded by God, if the moral exercises and duties implied in it, and signified by it, and which were professed and engaged, did not take place, but were neglected. These were of the essence of circumcision; the external rite was but a sign or token of the other, in which the covenant consisted; and if the things signified, professed, and promised by this external sign and token did not take place, the external sign and transaction was a mere nullity in the sight of God, and in the sight of men too, so far as this was apparent and known to them. This is expressly asserted by the apostle Paul, when speaking of circumcision. "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh." (Rom. ii. 25, 28.)

Therefore, when a parent in Israel circumcised his children, and neglected to do the duties enjoined, professed, and promised, of which the circumcision of his children was a token and pledge, and so did not keep the law of circumcision, but broke it, his children were, in this respect, as if they had not been circumcised, and the covenant of circumcision was as really and as much broken as if he had neglected to circumcise his children; and his children were, by this neglect, cut off from the promises and blessings of the covenant. Can any thing be more plain and certain than this? What moral exercises and duties, respecting the children, the parent professed and promised, and what was the law of circumcision in

this respect, has been briefly stated above, and will be more fully explained before the subject is closed.

Thirdly. Hence it appears that the covenant of circumcision, as it respected the seed or children of the parents who circumcised them, did not extend, in the promises of it, any farther than to the children thus circumcised, though the parents were faithful in keeping covenant, and acted up to their profession and engagements. They could transmit the blessings of the covenant, according to the promises of it, no farther than to their children which were circumcised by them. If these children should neglect to circumcise their children, or if they should circumcise them, and yet not keep the law of circumcision, but neglect the duties with respect to their children which they had professed and engaged, the covenant would be broken, and their children be cut off from the promises and blessings of it. And thus, this *everlasting* covenant, which, if faithfully kept, would transmit spiritual blessings and salvation to all generations, to the end of the world, may be, and has been, broken; by which breach of this covenant, all the dreadful and prevailing evils and the curse which have fallen upon mankind have been introduced and spread over the world, agreeably to the words of God by Isaiah. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, *broken the everlasting covenant.* Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate." (Isa. xxiv. 5, 6.)

But the following question will be suggested here, which requires an answer: —

Question. If spiritual blessings and salvation, the blessings promised in the covenant, be transmitted from parents who keep covenant to their children, these children will be holy and obedient, according to the promise made to their parents; consequently, their children will be holy and obedient also, and so on through every generation, to the end of the world. How then can this covenant be broken, so that any children in this line of succession should be unholy and disobedient? Must not holiness and salvation be infallibly transmitted from parents to children, to the last generation, according to this notion of the covenant, without a possibility of a breach of covenant?

Answer. The covenant, as it respects the parents, in their own persons, and the duties required of them, in order to their own salvation, is different from the covenant, and the duties required, as they respect their children. What regards their children is a distinct branch of the covenant, and differs from what respects their own persons only.

The covenant, as it respects the individual person entering into covenant, promises salvation to him who believeth, even to the least and lowest degree of true faith, by which he lays hold of the covenant; it promises that all such shall be finally saved; that they shall be furnished with every thing necessary for this, and shall be kept by the power of God, through their faith, unto salvation. The person entering into covenant, as it respects his own person, professes this faith, and to devote himself to God in the exercise of it; lays hold of the covenant, and promises by divine assistance, relying upon the promised grace of God, to live a life of faith and holiness.

The covenant, as it respects the children of believing parents, and includes them, promises spiritual blessings and salvation to them, on condition of the parents' faithfulness in devoting them to God, and bringing them up for him, persevering in the exercises and duties which are implied in this; and these exercises and duties respecting their children are professed and promised by the parents, when they devote them to God in this covenant transaction, and in applying the seal of the covenant to them. But there is no promise in this covenant that if they do, with a degree of sincerity, give up their children to God, and profess all those exercises and promise to perform all that duty towards them which are implied in bringing them up for God, that they shall certainly do all this; but they may be very deficient and unfaithful in this covenant, as it respects their children, and bring a curse upon them, rather than the blessings promised in the covenant.

Therefore, though the parents may be true believers, and interested in all the blessings of the covenant, so far as they respect themselves in their own persons, yet they may be so negligent of the exercises and duties of the covenant as it respects their children, and which they have promised, and by this so break the covenant, with respect to them, as to cut them off from the promised blessings of the covenant. Though the parents of children may, in one instance or more, be faithful in performing their promised duty to their children, and their children be made partakers of spiritual blessings in consequence of it; yet these children, though true believers, and interested in the blessings of the covenant themselves, may so neglect their duty to *their* children, as not to keep covenant as it respects them, and consequently their children be deprived of the blessings of the covenant; and so the covenant and the succession of blessings, from parents to children, be broken, and cease.

Though Abraham was faithful in this covenant, and fulfilled the duties of it as it respected his children, yet Isaac or Jacob,

or both, though good men, and interested in the promises of the covenant in their own persons, might be so negligent and unfaithful in their duty to *their* children, or some of them, at least, as to cut them off from the promises of the covenant, as it respected them. Eli appears to have been a good man; yet he was so negligent of his duty to his sons, that by this, evil came upon them. And King David, who was in many respects an eminently holy man, appears, from the history we have of him and his family, to be very unfaithful in his duty to many of his children, and indulged a partiality in their favor, and a parental fondness which was inconsistent with his treating them as he ought to have done, and led him far astray from his duty to them. Even his marrying so many wives was inconsistent with the regard he ought to have had for his posterity, and tended to prevent his doing his duty to his children. The prophet Malachi, speaking against polygamy, refers to the original institution of marriage by God, who made only one woman for one man, and says, "And did not he make ONE? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore ONE? That he might seek a GODLY seed." (Mal. ii. 15.) It appears from these words, that, in the institution of marriage, God had regard to the good of children and posterity, that they might be a holy seed; and that if the duties of this relation, particularly as they respect their offspring, be properly and faithfully attended to and performed, their children will be holy, inherit the blessings of the covenant, and be saved. It also appears, that polygamy is contrary to the good of posterity, and has a strong tendency to produce an ungodly seed, as it is unfriendly to the duties which parents owe to their children, and in many respects inconsistent with them.

It is to be observed, and must be kept in mind, that what has been said on the Abrahamic covenant and the circumcising his children, the profession, promise, and duties implied in this, and what depended upon these, with regard to the children, is equally applicable to parents and their seed, and to the baptism of their children, under the Christian dispensation.

All that has been observed concerning the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, may be yet further illustrated, and made more evident, by attending to the following words of God concerning Abraham and his children and household: "For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. xviii. 19)

First. We may observe what is here said of Abraham, which God knew he would do. He knew he would do it, because he had determined to work in him to will and to do it; for Abraham was wholly dependent on God for this, as for every thing else. "I know him, *that he will command his children and household after him.*" This implies the whole of the duty which he engaged towards his children and household, in the covenant of circumcision, and when he circumcised his children; and by doing this, he kept the covenant as it respected them. *Commanding them after him*, implies proper and careful instruction of them in the way of the Lord, teaching them the great doctrines of religion, what the way of the Lord is, what true religion is, and what are the revealed commands of God, and what duties they must do; for the exercise of authority and commands, without such instruction, would be improper, unreasonable, without a meaning, and absurd. This branch of duty cannot be done without constant study, and great care and pains, watching every opportunity for it, and repeating it without cessation, which cannot be done without a good degree of religious knowledge, and great assiduity, concern, and zeal. This part of the duty of parents to their children is particularly and repeatedly inculcated by God on the parents in Israel. "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. vi. 6, 7.) And again, "Therefore, ye shall lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them as the days of heaven upon earth." (Deut. xi. 18–21.)

Parental government is also implied in these words. Without a proper and wise government of children, they cannot be properly and with success instructed. They must teach, in this sense, *with all authority.* Children who are disobedient to their parents, which is always the case where there is no proper government, cannot be instructed by them. Therefore, a proper, steady, wise government of children, in the exercise of parental authority, is essential to their good education; and parents must *command their children after them*, if they would bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The importance and necessity of family government, for the

good of children and of the church, are exhibited in a striking light, by the law which God gave to Israel, which ordered that no ungoverned, disobedient child should live there, but that every one of this character should be put to death; and the parents were commanded to see it executed upon every child who would not submit to their government, and obey their commands. (Deut. xxi. 18–21.)

This branch of the education of children, which is so important and essential, cannot be properly and faithfully executed, without great and constant care, circumspection, prudence, and resolution; continually watching over their children, and treating and governing them in a manner best suited to answer the end of government, and lead them both to fear and love their parents.

These words also necessarily imply, that Abraham did *pray* constantly and with earnestness and importunity for his children, that God would indeed bless them, and render his endeavors successful, so as to form them to true piety, and secure their salvation; and also that he might be faithful and wise in attending upon and executing the important charge respecting his children. A pious believer, who feels towards his children in any good measure as he ought to do, and acts up to his character and obligations in the religious education of his children, must thus pray for himself, with regard to his duty to them and for them. He feels the infinite importance of their having the blessing of God, and of their salvation; that all their interest lies here; and he is a thousand times more concerned about this, and desirous of it, than of any temporal, worldly interest whatsoever.* He knows his obligations, and the vows he has solemnly taken upon himself, and is sensible of his dependence on God for wisdom and fidelity in the performance of what is justly expected of him, and that God only can bless the means he uses, and grant salvation to his children: a weighty sense of all this will bring him on his knees, in humble, constant, earnest application to God by prayer for assistance and success in this most important and interesting matter. To neglect such prayer, is grossly to neglect his duty to his children, and does imply a neglect of the other branches of their religious education, implied in commanding them after him. Therefore, when God said he knew Abraham, that he

* It is to be observed, that these are the views, feelings, and conduct of parents who come up to what might be justly expected of them. But this is not true of every pious parent. Such may be very unsteady in their views and feelings with respect to their children, and come vastly short of their duty in their conduct, and say and do many things which have a contrary and bad influence on their children, and be very offensive to God, and a gross violation of their obligations and vows.

would command his children and his household after him, it is implied that he knew he would pray for himself, that he might faithfully do this, and for his children, that they might have the blessing of God, and be saved.

These words also imply the good example that Abraham would set before his children, and his household, of piety and righteousness. He would command them *after him;* he would set them an example of that religion in which he educated them, and instruct and command them to follow him. This is essential in the proper and religious education of children. The parent who is not exemplary in his conduct, and does not set before his children an example of piety, righteousness, and benevolence, cannot give them a religious education. If he attempt to instruct, direct, and command them in the ways of religion, he will, in their sight, be guilty of gross contradictions, and will appear to them not to be sincere and in earnest; and his bad example, or want of a good one, will counteract and defeat all his attempts to instruct, exhort, and govern them, and will have more influence to corrupt them than any thing he may say or do in favor of religion can have to form them to piety and righteousness, if he should say or do any thing of this kind; but even this is not to be expected of such a parent. They who do not love religion, and practise it themselves, will not take any proper methods, and exert themselves suitably, to make their children truly religious.

This branch of duty requires great and constant care, watchfulness, and circumspection, that the whole of their conversation and conduct may be as becometh godliness, and recommend religion to all with whom they live and converse, — setting a calm, steady, dispassionate example of humility, uprightness, sincerity, truth, justice, benevolence, and mercy, expressing their piety in all proper ways, and on every suitable occasion, and practising religion and devotion in their families, and in a constant attendance on all divine institutions.

Abraham was under obligation to do all this. He professed to have a heart to do it, and promised to do all this duty to his children and household when he circumcised them. And God, who knew all things, and on whom Abraham wholly depended for grace and assistance to perform this difficult and important branch of duty, determined to work in him to will and to do it, and, therefore, knew that he would be faithful in keeping covenant, and not neglect to do it. And Christian parents, who bring their children to baptism, profess and engage all this duty in their treatment of them; and their obligations are increased, and are much greater and more extensive than those under which Abraham was; and they

are bound to greater attention, concern, and zeal, and to do much more in instructing and educating their children, than he was, as they have much greater light and advantages than he had, the future state being much more clearly brought into view now than it was then; and, consequently, the importance that children should be religious and be saved ought to be more strongly impressed on the minds of parents, and animate them to greater concern and zeal in this matter. And as they enjoy so much more light, they are under greater advantages to understand the great truths of religion, and to teach them to their children, and constantly inculcate them both by words and example; their duty is enlarged, and their obligations to faithfulness in the performance of it greatly increased; and every neglect of duty toward their children is much more criminal than such neglect would have been in the father of the faithful.

Secondly. In these words is declared the consequence of Abraham's faithfulness in his duty to his children in their education, and the certain connection of the former with the latter: "And they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." This is to be truly pious and holy, and to go in the way which leads to eternal salvation. Here, then, is a declared and promised connection between Abraham's being faithful and thorough in the covenant of circumcision, as it respected his children and their holiness and salvation, — the latter following as a certain and promised consequence of the former. This explains the covenant mentioned in the seventeenth chapter, which God made with Abraham and his seed, in which he promises to be a God to him and his seed after him, and confirms what has been observed above concerning this covenant, as being agreeable to the truth, viz., that in this covenant God promised spiritual blessings and salvation to the children of Abraham, upon condition of his faithfully performing what he professed and engaged to do with respect to them when they were circumcised by him, and that, on this ground, they were denominated a holy seed, and to be numbered among the saved.*

And as this covenant with Abraham, including his seed with him, was the covenant of grace, which, as to substance,

* It has been supposed, by some, that Ishmael, Abraham's son, was not a good man; but none ought to think so unless there were clear, positive evidence of it, which it is believed there is not. This supposition is inconsistent with the express declaration of God in the words which have been considered, viz., that the children of Abraham should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. It is said of him, when he died, "he was gathered unto his people." This is said of the good, but of no wicked man.

is the same into which God enters with all believers and their children, and is a pattern and example of God's entering into covenant with believers in all ages, taking in their children with them, which all hold who believe in the baptism of the children of believers; then why does not, why *must not*, this same covenant contain the same promise to believers of the holiness and salvation of their children, upon the same condition to be performed by them, through all ages, to the end of the world? If this covenant made with Abraham, including his seed with him, has been now rightly explained, agreeably to the plain meaning of it, the consequence will certainly follow. And that the true sense and meaning of the mutual promises between God and Abraham, with respect to his seed, has been given, and consequently that the seed of believers have the promise of holiness and salvation, upon the parents being faithful in keeping covenant as it respects their children, will appear yet more evident from other passages of Scripture which are now to be considered.

Those words of God which have been mentioned, — "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments," (Ex. xx. 6,) — compared with the words of Moses which have reference to these, — "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations," (Deut. vii. 9,) — serve to explain the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, and to confirm the sense which has now been given of it.

It has been shown that these words in the decalogue contain a promise to parents, who love God and keep his commandments, of mercy to their children; and that this mercy shown to their children, in consequence of the parents' keeping the commandments of God, respects their moral character, which implies true piety and final salvation; and that the course of this mercy, descending down to posterity, cannot be interrupted, unless the parents are unfaithful in keeping covenant. It has also been shown that keeping the commandments of God includes their duty to their children, in devoting them to God, and bringing them up for God; and what is implied in this has been particularly explained, and needs not to be repeated. It has been also shown that godly parents, who have a degree of true love to God, may grossly fail of keeping his commandments as they respect their children, and so break the covenant between God and them so far as it regards their posterity, and fail of having any share in the promise of mercy to them. But those who do not greatly fail of their duty in this respect, but are faithful in the covenant,

have the promise of mercy to their children, and are the happy instruments of conveying holiness and salvation to them, and no farther; but if their children be also faithful, they hereby hand down spiritual blessings to their children, and so on to a thousand generations; and the succession cannot be interrupted but by breach of covenant by some of the parents. These words, therefore, thus explained and understood,* (and it is believed that no other consistent sense can be put upon them,) do confirm what has been said of the covenant made with Abraham, and his seed, and with all believers and their children, to the end of the world, and prove that the covenant of grace and mercy contains a promise of mercy and salvation to the children of parents who faithfully keep the covenant and commands of God as they respect their children.

And in this view, the natural and easy sense of those words of the apostle Peter, which have been the subject of so much altercation, offers itself as another proof of the point under consideration. The words are, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; *for the promise is unto you and to your children.*" (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

The covenant with Abraham contained a promise to him and his children, which is denoted by *the promise.* And as the apostle is speaking to the Jews, they would naturally understand this covenant by *the promise*, and that these words of Peter imported that this covenant was still in force, and was not curtailed or altered in this respect; and though now baptism was the token and seal of the covenant, instead of circumcision, yet still it contained the promise of saving mercy to every penitent believer, and to his children, as did the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham their father. It was natural, and of importance, when he spoke to the Jews of baptism, and exhorted them to submit to it, to explain to them the covenant and the promise of which baptism was the seal, and to mention the nature and extent of it, and to show that it reached their children as well as themselves, and included them as much as their parents, as did the covenant with Abraham and their fathers, the covenant of circumcision.

The Pedobaptists have generally understood these words in the sense which has now been given, and considered them as a strong and conclusive argument for the baptism of the children of believers, as included in the covenant of which baptism is the seal, and interested in the promise; though they have

* See page 103, etc.

not agreed in the meaning and extent of the promise made to the children of believing parents, nor in explaining the condition on which the promise is made. It is for them now to consider and judge whether the true meaning of these words has not been stated above, according to the Scripture, and whether any other consistent meaning in favor of infant baptism, and agreeable to the passages of Scripture which have been considered under this head, can be thought of and supported.

The following words of Solomon connect the wise, faithful, and pious education of children with their piety and salvation, and amount to a promise that the latter shall be the consequence of the former: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Pr. xxii. 6.) These words assert the same thing which God says of Abraham and his children, which has been considered. "He will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." And they coincide with all that has been said on this point, and serve to strengthen the evidence that parents have a promise in the covenant of grace, that, upon their faithfulness in keeping covenant as it respects their children, they shall go in the way to heaven.

What he says elsewhere concerning the education of children, may be considered in the same light. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with a rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." (Pr. xxii. 15; xxiii. 13, 14; xxix. 17.) *Correcting* a child, *the rod of correction, and beating him with a rod*, intends the whole of a wise and faithful education of children, as a proper government of them is an essential part of such education, and cannot be properly and thoroughly, and with success, maintained and practised where the other parts of education are neglected. To such proper and wise government, and the faithful, painful, religious education implied in it, are connected the wisdom, piety, and salvation of the children, and repeatedly promised in those words. It will drive foolishness far from them; consequently they will be wise, which implies true piety. They shall not die; but their souls shall be delivered from hell, therefore shall be saved. They shall give rest and delight to the pious parent, which they cannot do unless they are wise and holy.

There are many other passages of Scripture which coincide

with the idea of the covenant of grace which has been now given, and serve to strengthen the evidence which has already been produced from the Scripture, that, it contains promises of saving good to the children of those who keep covenant as it respects their offspring. Several of these have been mentioned, which contain declarations and promises of blessings to the children of those who love God and keep his commandments, and that this shall take place, especially in the millennium, when parents shall in general be more faithful in keeping covenant. There are others of the same tenor, such as the following: "I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." (Isa. lxi. 8, 9; lxv. 23.) "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." (Ps. lxxviii. 5–7.) In these words, it is represented that, according to the covenant and appointment of God, piety was to be handed down from parents to children, by the care and fidelity of the former, in educating and instructing the latter. The following passage has reference to the words in the decalogue, which have been considered, and confirm the meaning which has been given of them: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them." (Ps. ciii. 17, 18.)

When the prophet Malachi foretells the introduction of the gospel dispensation, and of John the Baptist, the messenger who should prepare the way before Christ, and the effect and consequence of all this, he comprehends the whole in the following words, with which the Old Testament concludes: "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. iv. 6.) These words do not only express the effect of the preaching of John while he was on the stage of life, but the nature and effect of the Christian dispensation which he should introduce, so far as it should

take place. This effect took place, in some degree, in the days of John, and his preaching tended to promote it. And this is the natural tendency of Christianity; it had this effect in the days of the apostles to a greater degree than in the days of John; and so far as Christianity has been understood, and the true spirit of it has been imbibed, in any age and nation since that time to this day, it has tended to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. But when true religion shall flourish, and take place universally, to a greater degree than ever it has yet done, this prediction will be accomplished in a much higher degree, and more apparently than ever before; to which the ministry of John, and all that has taken place since, may properly be considered as an introduction, and to which those words, therefore, have a principal reference; and the chief accomplishment of them will be in that day, which is yet to come.

By the heart of the fathers being turned unto the children, is not meant the exercise and increase of what is called natural affection; for this is found in a sufficient degree in almost all parents, at all times, and if it were increased, it would not alter their moral character, or answer any good end. It must, therefore, intend the exercise of a religious, pious affection towards them, leading them to a proper and great concern for their salvation, and a zeal and engagedness to do their duty faithfully, and in all respects, as it concerns their children, and which has a tendency to promote their holiness and salvation, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; sensible of their covenant engagements to do this, and of the strong motives and great encouragement God has set before them, to be faithful and laborious in this, by the gracious promise he has given them.

The heart of the children is turned to their parents, when they are disposed to obey them in the Lord, and grow up in the exercise of piety and righteousness, or keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; following and imitating their parents in this, as the children of Abraham did. When they hearken to their pious fathers, saying, "My son, receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways;" (Pr. ii. 1, 2; xxiii. 26;) then the heart of the children will be turned to the fathers.

It is to be observed here, that the turning of the heart of the children to their parents is in consequence of the heart of the fathers being turned unto the children, as being connected with it. This is agreeable to those Scriptures which have been

considered, as they have been explained; showing that there is a constituted or promised connection between parents keeping covenant, and doing the duty towards their children which they have promised, which is expressed by their heart being turned towards them, and the piety and salvation of the children, which is necessarily implied in their heart being turned toward their parents, hearkening to them, and obeying them in the Lord in all things.

It is here represented, that this shall take place under the gospel dispensation, which John the Baptist should introduce, in a higher degree than it had done before; and Christianity and true religion should be propagated in this way, and handed down from parents to children; and that this shall take place, especially in the millennium, of which time the prophet speaks particularly in the preceding part of this chapter; when Christianity shall have its proper and genuine effect, to a much greater degree than ever before, and which will, therefore, be, in the highest sense, the gospel day, the day of salvation; when the heart of fathers will be turned unto their children, in the sense above explained, to a vastly higher degree than they ever were before, and consequently the hearts of children will be turned to their fathers, more universally, in the high exercise of piety, from their youth. And in this view, these words coincide with those Scriptures which have been mentioned, where God promises that he will then circumcise the heart of parents and of their children, to love the Lord, etc.; that he will pour his Spirit upon the seed of his people, and his blessing upon their offspring; that his church shall be established in righteousness, and all her children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of her children; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever. I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them; and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make

an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Deut. xxx. 6. Isa. xliv. 3, 4; liv. 13, 14; lix. 21; lxi. 8, 9; lxv. 23. Jer. xxxii. 38–40.) — "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." By these words, it is represented that the only way, according to divine constitution and appointment, to keep up true religion in the world, and transmit it down to the end of it, and so to prevent mankind becoming totally corrupt, so as to be destroyed by the curse of God, as they once were by a flood, is to turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. And that this will take place, in an eminent degree, in the millennium, by which the everlasting covenant will be maintained, and appear in its full force and operation; by which means the curse of God on mankind, by his terrible judgments for their wickedness in breaking the everlasting covenant, renouncing it themselves and with respect to their children, not training them up for God in the ways of true piety, but for the devil, in the ways of sin, shall have a stop put to it, and proceed no farther, as it otherwise must, and would, to the total extirpation of mankind. These words may, perhaps, receive some illustration by the following passage in Isaiah, which has been mentioned: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, *broken the everlasting covenant; therefore hath the curse devoured the earth*, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." (Isa. xxiv. 5, 6.) This chapter is a prophecy of the introduction of the millennium, and of the awful judgments on mankind, and especially on corrupt, nominal Christians, previous to that by which a great part of men shall be destroyed, as a testimony of the displeasure of God with them for their great wickedness, and not fearing God themselves, nor educating their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but the contrary; training them up in sin and the service of Satan, and thus transgressing the law, changing the ordinance of God, and breaking the everlasting covenant, which, if kept, would convey true religion down from generation to generation. But all mankind shall not be destroyed, because the remaining few, compared with the whole, shall be truly pious, and their hearts shall be turned to their children, and the hearts of the children to them, and so a pious race shall be propagated and multiplied and fill the world; "for God will then pour his Spirit on them, and on their seed, and his blessing on their offspring; and they shall spring up as

among grass, as willows by the watercourses." This is represented in the following words, in this same chapter: "When thus it shall be, in the midst of the land, among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive-tree, and as the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea." (Isa. xxiv. 13, 14.)

The reasonableness and importance of such a constitution and covenant between God and parents, with respect to their children, and the good ends this is suited to answer, will further appear by the following observations, which will, at the same time, serve to strengthen the evidence that the covenant of grace does contain a promise of saving good to the children of parents who are faithful in keeping covenant, as it regards their offspring:—

1. It appears from reason and the circumstances of the case, and from fact and experience, that the good education of children is of great importance, and necessary for their good and the good of society.

Children are very much formed in their disposition and manners by their education. If this be bad, or wholly, or in a great measure, neglected, and they be not governed and instructed, and have not good examples set before them, but the contrary, the bad effects of this are generally seen in them, and they become injurious to society rather than a benefit. God has so constituted things, that if parents be wise and faithful in educating their children, they will have more influence on them than any others can, and this has a great tendency to form them to a good moral character and conduct. And the parents must have the first and chief hand in teaching them, and forming their minds, and regulating their conduct, as they are under the best advantages to do this; and if it be wholly neglected by them, other means and advantages are never like to reach them so as to do them any great good, according to the ordinary course of things. It is certain that no instruction from any other quarter, or any means that can be used with them, can have an equal tendency to their benefit; and if parents neglect their duty to their children, other means used for their instruction and benefit are commonly useless and in vain to them.

It is known, from experience, that the character of children is not only often, but commonly, formed for life while they are in their minority, while they are under the care and education of their parents, or of others who are substituted in their room; and a foundation is generally laid then, if ever, for their piety and moral Christian character, so far as we can judge from appearance and facts.

2. Therefore, this branch of duty — the wise and faithful education of children — is much insisted upon, and often strictly enjoined, in Scripture. This is frequently inculcated on the members of the church of Israel, as a very important part of their duty. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life; *but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.* Gather the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, *and that they may teach them their children.* These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt *teach them diligently unto thy children*, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. iv. 9, 10; vii. 6; vi. 7.) This is so important a command that it is repeated again: "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut xi. 19.)

It is again and again enjoined in the following words: "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, that they may hear, and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, which have not known them, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God." (Deut. xxxi. 12, 13.) "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law: for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life." (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.) It was repeatedly enjoined upon parents to teach their children the great works God had done for them, and the deliverances he had wrought for his people, and to explain to them the meaning of the religious rites which were instituted by God, and the commands and ordinances which he had given them. (Ex. x. 2; xii. 25–27; xiii. 14, 15. Deut. vi. 20–25.)

God speaks of it as an excellent and important part of the character and conduct of Abraham, that he would command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. (Gen. xviii. 19.) The Psalmist mentions the command of God to instruct and educate children, as an important article, and as necessary to transmit true knowledge and piety to posterity. "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, *that they should make them*

known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise *and declare them to their children:* that they might set their hope in God," etc. (Ps. lxxviii. 5–7.)

Solomon often speaks of the importance and advantage of the faithful and wise education of children, and inculcates it as a duty. He says, "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes. Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from a child: for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest: yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." (Pr. xiii. 24; xix. 18; xxii. 6, 15; xxiii. 13, 14; xxix. 15, 17.) And the nine first chapters of the Proverbs of Solomon are designed to express the concern parents ought to have for the spiritual good of their children, and their constant attention to them in this view, — watching over them, instructing, admonishing, and warning them, — and through the whole exhibit the importance and necessity of the children's hearkening and obeying their parents, in order to their good, and the happy consequence of this to them; and the awful consequence of slighting and disobeying parents is repeatedly mentioned in that book.

This is the first command in the second table of the decalogue: "Honor thy father and thy mother;" to which is annexed a promise of good, which supposes the duty of parents to govern and instruct their children, and to exercise great and constant care in their education, and to conduct so as to be worthy of love, respect, and honor from their children. And an awful curse is denounced upon those children who do not obey this command: "Cursed is he that setteth light by his father or mother." (Deut. xxvii. 16.) And God made a law, which, if observed, did effectually prevent any disobedient children living in the congregation of Israel; for, if parents had a disobedient child, they were commanded to bring him forth to the elders of the city, and witness against him, and he was put to death. (Deut. xxi. 18–21.) This law was suited to awaken and keep alive the feelings of pious parents towards their children, and excite a great concern, and unremitting care and exertion, early and constantly to govern them, and

keep up their authority in the wisest and best manner, suited to form them to love and obedience; and to instruct, admonish, and warn them, and educate them in the best manner which shall tend to promote their obedience and true piety, having the awful event constantly in view, which might be the consequence of their neglect, and would certainly take place if their children should grow up ungoverned and disobedient.

And this law had a mighty tendency to impress the hearts of children with a sense of the evil consequence to them of disobedience to their parents, and to guard them against the least degree of a disposition to disregard and slight them, and to excite them to a constant care and resolution to attend to the instructions and admonitions of their parents, and strictly obey all their exhortations and commands. In what an important and interesting light does this law, and the other directions and precepts which have been mentioned under this head, set the wise and faithful education of children, and their obedience to the instructions and authority of their parents! It is suited powerfully to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers.

And under the gospel dispensation the faithful and pious education of children, and their obedience to parents in all things, are strictly enjoined. The command is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. vi. 1, 4. Col. iii. 20.) And no man who had a family could be an officer in the church, unless he was "one that ruled well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity," even faithful or believing children. (1 Tim. iii. 4. Tit. i. 6.)

3. Since the faithful, prudent, and religious education of children is of such vast importance, and so necessary for their good and the good of the church, according to the natural course of things which God has constituted, and since this is so strictly enjoined upon the people of God, and so much inculcated in divine revelation, it may hence be inferred, that God has set before parents the strongest motives and the greatest encouragements to be faithful and laborious in their duty to their children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and which will have the greatest tendency to animate them to engagedness and perseverance in this difficult work, in which they will meet with much opposition and many discouragements from themselves, from the world, Satan, and their children. This may be reasonably

expected, especially in the covenant of *grace*, or that *gracious* covenant which God makes with believers as it respects their children and their duty to them; for the greater the blessings are which are promised to their offspring, and the greater the motives and encouragements are to do the duty enjoined, or perform the condition on which the blessings are suspended, the more grace is contained and exhibited in the covenant.

4. A promise that the children shall be blessed with spiritual blessings and salvation on the parents' faithfulness to them, and bringing them up for God, affords the strongest motive, and gives the greatest encouragement, to pious parents to be faithful and perform the condition of the covenant as it respects their children, that can be thought of as possible, and renders the covenant in this respect, in the highest degree, a covenant of grace.

If pious parents felt as they ought, and had exercises which might be reasonably expected towards their children, their greatest concern would be that they might be sanctified and saved. This they would desire for them unspeakably above all other things. To have them live and die in sin is, to such parents, infinitely dreadful. They had much rather have no offspring than to bring forth children for such a death, even eternal destruction. If their children may not be holy and saved, they have nothing to ask or desire for them; their existence, and all they can have and enjoy, is, on the whole, worse than nothing, infinitely worse. Therefore, that they may be holy and saved, is the great object of their desires and prayers. And what can be more agreeable and pleasing to such parents, than for God to take their children into covenant with them, and to say, "If you will be faithful to your children, and treat them as becomes pious parents, and bring them up for me, I will be their God, and they shall be holy and happy forever. Therefore, let all your concern for the good and salvation of your children excite and animate you to proper exercises and faithfulness with respect to them; for they are committed to you, to bring them up for me; and if you will do this faithfully, they shall be blessed and saved"? What Christian parent is there, whose views and feelings are in any good measure answerable to his character, who would not admire the condescension and grace of such a promise, and rejoice to enter into such a covenant and promise, through Christ's strengthening him to perform the condition of the covenant, and give up his children to Christ, and have the seal of the covenant put upon them?

And upon this ground, the children of believers are holy, and numbered among the saints and the saved. Holiness and

salvation are secured to them by divine promise, on condition the parents are faithful in the covenant, which they solemnly profess and engage to be. The church, relying on their profession and engagements that they will be faithful and keep the covenant as it respects their children, consider them, receive and look upon them, as holy, and those who shall be saved; so they are as visibly holy, or as really holy in their view, as their parents are.

But here several questions, which may be suggested from what has been said on this point, must be answered.

Ques. 1. Is not this doctrine, that the covenant of grace contains a promise of the holiness and salvation of the children of parents who are faithful in their duty to them, and in educating them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, contrary to known fact and experience, in that so many children of pious parents appear as destitute of holiness as other children, and are of a contrary character, when they are capable of discovering their disposition by their conduct, and many of them appear to live and die so; and there are many known instances of children whose parents appear to be eminently pious and careful to educate their children well, who yet appear to have no piety, but are openly and notoriously vicious, and appear to live and die so? And how can all the children of professors of religion who enter into covenant with God, be considered as really holy, or how can it be expected that they will grow up pious children and be saved, when this does not appear to be true in fact in so many instances, but the contrary?

Ans. 1. It does appear, from fact, that the education of children, if in any good measure practised, and so far as it has taken place, has a great influence on children in general; and many of them who have had any degree of a pious education, do themselves become professors of religion, and appear to be holy. How much greater and more universal might be the good effect of such education, if parents were more faithful and thorough in this branch of their duty than they generally are, even as diligent and faithful as might reasonably be expected, considering the importance of the case, and the motives and encouragements they have.

This leads to

Ans. 2. Parents who have been professors of religion, and have entered into covenant with God, have been, in general, grossly negligent of their duty to their children, and have lived in the constant violation of the covenant as it respects their children. This will appear to every one who will consider what is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord, as it has been briefly stated above, and judge what might reasonably be required and expected of parents in this important and interesting matter; and at the same time will, in the light of this, observe how the children, even of the professors of religion, are in general educated. He will be sensible there is but little wise and prudent government, steadily and perseveringly maintained, from the early days in which children are capable of discipline and government until they cease to be minors; and that much of the contrary generally takes place, which is suited to weaken all parental authority, and tends to ruin the children. He will find few instances, if any, of that careful, wise, and constant instruction, assiduously endeavoring to instil into their young minds the principles of true knowledge and wisdom, and watching over them to guard them from wrong notions, errors, and delusions in things of religion, which are most reasonable and important, and which we find so strictly enjoined in the Bible. And what bad examples — of evil speaking and backbiting, of vain, trifling conversation, of passion, of covetousness and worldliness, of great indifference and neglects respecting the exercises and practice of piety, in reading and studying the Bible and the worship of God — are to be found among professors in general, which have a great and destructive influence on the minds of children! And how few are there who are not greatly deficient in the example they set before their children, which could not take place were they not grossly negligent in their duty to them, and had they a reasonable and proper concern for their good! How little is done or said by parents, in general, which is suited to excite and maintain a proper and faithful education of children, in all the parts of it! How little do they appear to regard or understand their covenant engagements, or the nature of the covenant into which they have entered, and the encouragements and promises made to faithfulness in keeping covenant, and the infinite importance of this to their children! And the churches take no care in this matter to watch over one another with respect to the education of their children, and to warn and exhort and assist each other to do their duty in this respect, which is certainly a great neglect.

When these things are properly considered, the general want of piety and the too common irreligion and vice, which are found among the children of professors of religion, may be accounted for, consistent with there being a promise in the covenant of grace, that the children of parents who faithfully perform the duties of the covenant towards them shall be holy, and share in the great salvation, and does not

afford the least shadow of an argument that there is no such promise.

True religion has generally been in so low a degree in the church, and still is, and there have been so many members of it wholly strangers to a life of godliness, not being true believers, that the life and power of Christianity has not had the proper influence and been acted out by professors in general as it ought to be, and might be reasonably expected.

Most real Christians have been, and now are, shamefully deficient as to the strength and constancy of their religious exercises, and in every branch of duty; and their discerning and knowledge in the doctrines and duties of Christianity has been in so small a degree, that when, considering the time and advantages they have had, they ought to be teachers, especially of their children, they, in general, need themselves to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. And the nature and extent of the covenant of grace, as it respects the children of believers, and the design and meaning of the institution of baptism of such children, and what is implied in it, have not been generally understood: and the duty which parents engage to do towards their children has been greatly overlooked and disregarded, even in theory as well as practice; and the promise of the success of faithfulness in this duty, in the holiness and salvation of their children, has not been believed by the most, and they are now disposed to oppose this sentiment, and so cannot feel the motives and great encouragement this affords and sets before parents, to care and faithfulness in this branch of duty, nor the vast importance of it to them and their children.

It is, therefore, no matter of wonder that the children of professors in general, and of really pious parents, have not received the blessings of the covenant of grace, as the duties of the covenant have been so grossly neglected by almost all; and they have not so much as believed that there is any such covenant between God and themselves respecting their children. This is what might be reasonably expected, as things have gone on and still take place with regard to children, in the great neglect of that duty to which the promise of success is made: which branch of duty has doubtless been more neglected by really Christian parents than other branches of Christianity, not only because it has been less understood and inculcated, and the motives and encouragement to faithfulness in it have been kept out of sight, or, at most, been less in view, but because there are peculiar difficulties and temptations in the way of a wise and faithful discharge of this duty; and Satan, who knows how much depends upon the parent's faith-

fulness, and what advantages he gains against children and the church, and the interest of religion in general, by the gross neglect of this branch of duty, exerts all his cunning and power, and improves every advantage he has, to lay snares and stumbling blocks in the way of their duty, and in magnifying the difficulties and discouragements, to deter them from it; offering every temptation he can to neglect it, and to do that which has a contrary and most fatal tendency, even to ruin their children. Nor is there any certainty that this influence of the devil will cease, or that the power of godliness will so take place in general, as to lead parents to be faithful in their duty to their children, and to keep covenant, so that the blessings of it shall descend from father to son through many generations, until Satan shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up there a thousand years, that he may deceive men no more during all that time; and when Christianity shall have its proper and full effect, by the effusions of the Holy Spirit in greater degrees than before, forming Christians to eminent degrees of holiness and true zeal and engagedness to do their duty in all the branches of it, especially that which they owe to their children, which is now so much and so generally neglected. Then the heart of the fathers will be turned to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, as they never were before; and the covenant of grace, which contains promises to parents and their children, will take place in the full extent of it, and the happy consequences of it be seen and enjoyed.

Such a time is abundantly spoken of and predicted in the Scripture; and all that takes place previous to that day is preparatory to it. That is the time of salvation, in the highest sense, when the doctrines and institutions of the gospel will be better understood than ever before, and have their proper and full effect. The Bible itself has principal reference to that time, and will be then understood, prized, and improved more and better than ever before. The institutions and ordinances of Christ have been, and now are, greatly misunderstood, perverted, and abused by most Christian churches and professors of religion, and great irregularities take place in attendance on them. The time preceding the millennium may be compared to the winter, when things appear in great disorder and confusion, and the influences of the sun are weak and small, and have little effect; but all is preparatory to the spring and summer, when the sun and rain will have their proper effect in producing the fruits of the earth.

These observations are made, to show that we cannot judge of the good effect of the proper, pious, and faithful education

of children, and of the extent of the promises of the covenant of grace, and of the design and meaning of the baptism of the children of believers, by what has already taken place in the Christian church: but we must learn this from the Bible, and not expect that the proper and happy effect of this institution will take place in any great degree, until the spirit and power of Christianity shall be more felt and exerted in practice, which will introduce the millennium. Then parents, with their hearts full of love to Christ, and under a sense of the infinite importance of the salvation of their children, and ardently desiring to be the happy instruments of it, will give them up to Christ in baptism, rejoicing in this seal of the divine promise to bless them, on their acting a consistent and faithful part towards them, and with a heart admiring the grace of God in this covenant, and strongly desirous and disposed to be faithful, they will lay hold of the covenant, and make it their great concern and an important branch of their duty, to bring up their children for Christ. Then the happy effect of this will be seen in the early piety of the children, who will grow up in the fear of God, and walk in his ways, to the unspeakable satisfaction and joy of the parents, and the comfort and edification of the church. Then, when a large congregation of Christians shall be assembled for public worship, all possessed with a realizing belief and sense of the truth of the gospel and the great salvation, and their hearts glowing with fervent love to Christ and to each other, what pleasure and joy will it spread over such an assembly, when children are brought by their parents and publicly dedicated to Christ in baptism; solemnly and with all their hearts engaging to bring them up for him, and laying hold of the gracious promise of the covenant to their children! All will consider these children as heirs of the blessings of the covenant and numbered among the saved, confident that the parents will faithfully keep covenant with God; and having seen the general happy effect of this, they will join in all the solemnities of this transaction with great pleasure, ferveney, and joy, and every one be edified and animated to the duty of his station, and go away with enlarged views of the grace of the gospel, and the condescension and love of Christ.

Ans. 3. Though some of the children of parents who appear eminently pious, and to take much pains in the education of their children, do, when they come to adult age, renounce all religious duty and live in open vice, yet this affords no real evidence that the doctrine to which this fact is alleged as an objection is not true; for, —

1. We cannot be certain that those who appear to be Christians, and to excel many others, are really such. They may

deceive others, and be themselves deceived, and never truly and with their heart devote their children to God. The first, in appearance and profession, may be last, and wholly destitute of true holiness. No argument can be justly formed from such instances, unless there were a certainty that the parents are real Christians, and faithful in keeping covenant with God.

2. Parents who are real Christians, and excel in some respects in pious zeal, and in the practice of many of the duties of Christianity, may be very deficient and unfaithful in their duty to their children. They may be guilty of neglecting that which is important and essential in the good education of children, in some instances at least, and of doing or saying that which tends to hurt and ruin their children, in some particular instances and on some occasions, which may be the means of giving an evil bias to their minds, and issue in their abandoning themselves to vice. And this may be the case with regard to one particular child, while they are more wise and faithful in their treatment and education of their other children; and such instances of neglect or wrong conduct toward some or all of their children may so displease God, as to give up the children to sin and ruin. It has been observed, that parents may keep covenant, as it respects their own persons, and yet neglect the duties of it, as it respects their children. This is so difficult a part of duty, and Satan is so watchful, and exerts all his policy and power to prevent parents doing it, and to promote that which is contrary to it, and the proper education of children is so little understood, and the importance of it not much attended to and realized, and the encouragement and promise God has given to the faithful discharge of this duty is so generally not believed or overlooked, that it may be reasonably supposed that some parents who are eminently pious, and devoted to the duties of religion in other respects, may so fail of their duty to their children in some important part of their education, as shall tend to bring a curse on them rather than a blessing.*

And it is left to the reader to consider, whether it be not more reasonable, and for the honor of God and religion, when such instances of the impiety of the children of parents who

* When all this is well considered, it will not appear incredible or unaccountable, that pious parents, and even those who may appear eminently so, in many respects, may be greatly deficient and unfaithful in their duty to their children, and much more so than in any other branch of their duty, notwithstanding the natural affection they have for them, and the desire they must be supposed to have of their salvation; and he who contemplates and keeps in view the nature and extent of this duty, and carefully observes the general conduct of those parents whose piety is not questioned as it respects their children, will find it confirmed by lamentable and too notorious fact. On what ground, then, can it be doubted?

appear eminently godly take place, to impute it to the unfaithfulness of the parents in this branch of their duty, in some very important and capital instance, rather than to curtail the covenant of grace and doubt of the promise of saving blessings to the children of parents who are faithful in keeping covenant, or of the faithfulness of God to fulfil his promise whenever the condition is in some good measure performed.

Ans. 4. Though parents who have given up their children to Christ in baptism and promised to bring them up for him, have in so many instances neglected their duty, and come so far short in the education of their children, that they have generally grown up without any appearance of piety, this is not a sufficient reason to lay aside the institution of Christ, and practise it no more. We are to hope that professors of religion will in future be more faithful. The church has no right to reject those who offer their children in baptism, and profess and promise to devote them to Christ, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and refuse to receive their children as holy and belonging to Christ, because so many children of professors who have been thus devoted and received have discovered, when they became adult, that they were not truly pious, and have refused to obey Christ. This should rather excite Christians to watch over each other, and exhort one another daily, respecting their duty to their children, and awaken the church to the practice of a more strict and thorough discipline; and to take more care of the children of the church, those lambs of the flock, as soon as they are capable of public admonition and discipline.

There are too many instances of persons who are received into the church in adult years, as holy and real Christians, who afterwards fall from their Christian character and violate the laws of Christ, and are rejected by the church, or ought to be, as those who have disappointed their hopes and expectations; yet such instances, however numerous, cannot be justly alleged as a reason why they should receive no more upon their profession and engagements to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, because they have been deceived in others, who have fallen from their Christian profession. This ought to excite the church to greater care in receiving persons as real Christians, and to a more strict and constant watchfulness over those they do receive, and the use of all proper means to prevent their apostasy and all unchristian conduct, and to induce them to obey Christ in all things.

Ques. 2. If there were such a promise of saving blessings to children, on a condition to be performed by the parents, and which they engage, is it not reasonable to suppose this

condition would be specified, and so particularly stated and described, that parents might distinctly know what it is, and when they come up to it, or fall short of it? and would not this be necessary in order to afford any proper encouragement and satisfaction to parents? The covenant of grace contains promises of salvation to faith, repentance, or love to God; and these are defined, and the nature and concomitants of them particularly described; and the promise is made not only to those who exercise these graces in a particular high degree, but to the lowest possible degree of these; so that, if persons know they have any thing of this nature, they may, from that, be certain of salvation. But, in the case before us, no such thing is supposed, or can be true; but the matter is left so vague and uncertain that none can know whether he has come up to the condition to which the promise is made, or not, or how far he is from it. Is not this a strong and unanswerable objection to the doctrine now advanced?

Ans. 1. All will grant that there are certain exercises of heart, — a constant course and degree of them, — and of external duties, which are the proper expression of those exercises of heart which parents owe to their children, and which may reasonably be expected of pious parents, and must take place in order to their acting a consistent part, and answerable to the Christian character and to such a relation. And they who practise infant baptism consider parents as professing a desire and willingness to perform this duty, and promising to be faithful in doing it; that they profess to give up their children to Christ, desiring for them, above all other things, that they may be saved; and promise to bring them up for Christ, and act a faithful part to them, agreeably to such dedication and such desires.

Now, if any one will tell what is implied in this engagement and duty, which the parent must perform in order to fulfil his promise and perseveringly conduct agreeably to this transaction, and state it with such exactness that the parent may know when he has come fully up to it, or how far he has been deficient, then it will be easy to tell precisely what is the condition on the parent's part to which the promise of saving blessings to his children is made, so that the parent may know whether he has performed it or not, and how far he has fallen short of it; for he has already done it in showing what is the duty promised by the parent and justly expected of him.

But if this cannot be done, it is as much of an objection to there being any duty promised or required of the parent, in order to his acting a faithful and consistent part towards his child, as that which has been mentioned, in the question

under consideration, to there being a promise of saving blessings to children, on a condition which is required, and yet not precisely stated. If duty may be required of parents towards their children, which they may and ought to promise to perform, — without pointing out the precise degree of duty, or the particular manner and circumstances in which it is to be done, — then this same duty, thus required and promised, may be made the condition of saving blessings to the children. Surely, if it may be required and promised, it may be required and promised as a condition to which God, who requires it, promises blessings to the children.

Ans. 2. The condition of the promise is expressed as particularly and as plain as the nature of the case will admit, and so as to be sufficiently intelligible to an honest, pious mind. The whole is contained and expressed in the following sentence and injunction: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The whole Bible is suited to explain this sentence, and show what is the meaning of it, and the duty implied in it, so that he who is willing to know and do his duty, in this branch of it, and comply with this injunction, and will properly attend to the matter, will sufficiently understand the meaning of it, and be at no undesirable uncertainty concerning it.

It is certain, that, in these words, a duty is enjoined on parents, or a course of exercises, exertions, and conduct, to such a degree, and with such constancy, care, and faithfulness, as to *educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* And all will grant that this command is sufficiently plain, and does clearly point out the duty, so that parents may know what it is and comply with it, and that it is stated as precisely as the nature of the case and kind of the duty will admit. And must it not, then, for the same reason, be granted that it is as sufficiently plain to be the condition of a promise, and that, as such, it is as fully and clearly expressed as the nature of the case requires, or will admit?

Ans. 3. The condition, or the kind and measure, of the duty to which this promise is made, is as precisely and fully stated in the Scripture as is desirable, and so as to be suited to answer the end designed by it.

It is enough for the parents to know that it is a covenant of GRACE into which God enters with them, and that the condition of the promise of saving blessings to their children is as low as can be, consistent with answering the ends of it, and that Christ, who is infinitely gracious, and knows what is right, and has stated the condition, will not be rigorous, but

make all proper and possible allowances in their favor, even all that they can reasonably desire; for *grace* will look on their exercises and conduct in the most favorable light. They have, therefore, all possible encouragement to exert themselves constantly, and strain every nerve in doing their duty to their children, that they may be faithful, and come up to the condition, knowing that no advantage will be taken of them for their many imperfections and defects, which they constantly confess and lament, if they be laborious and faithful in any good degree answerable to the importance of the case, and the motives and encouragements which are set before them. And their not knowing whether they have come up to that degree of exercise, care, and faithfulness, which is the condition of the promise, and fear that they have not, will be a constant spur to them to greater care, watchfulness, and diligence, that, if by any means, they may obtain the promised blessing to their children. And the greater and more constant their care and exertions are, and the more strongly they find their hearts turned unto their children in the practice of parental duty toward them, the more comfort they will have in the hope and confidence that the heart of their children will be turned to them, and that God will bless and save them; while they are still constantly and with importunity looking to him for grace and assistance to do their duty to their children, and that they may be blessed indeed.

Quest. 3. Is not this a *legal scheme?* Salvation, according to this, is given to children for the good works of the parents; or, the children are saved by the obedience, and good and meritorious deeds, of the parents. Is not this directly contrary to salvation by free grace?

Ans. 1. It is certain, from Scripture, that God has given blessings to children out of regard to the obedience and faithfulness of their parents and ancestors. There are many instances of this in Scripture, which the attentive readers of it must have observed. Abraham, Caleb, and David are instances of it. Yet these blessings were as much of free grace as if they had not been given in this way.

Ans. 2. Many and great blessings, both in this world and in heaven, are promised and given to men as a reward of their obedience; and yet these blessings and rewards are as much the fruit of free grace as they could be if given in any other way, because they are really no more *deserving* of the blessings and rewards they receive than if they had not obeyed.

Ans. 3. The obedience and faithfulness of the parents in keeping covenant does not render their children more deserving

of blessings than if they had not obeyed. Holiness and salvation come to the children as much a free gift, and there is as much free grace in this gift to them, as if it did not come to them in this way in connection with the obedience of the parents; and the parents' obedience has not the least merit or desert of such blessings. Therefore, the promise made to them of saving blessings to their children, on condition of their obedience, is a *gracious* promise, wholly the fruit and expression of free, undeserved grace, as much as if their obedience were not the condition; and the parents depend on free, sovereign grace for a heart and assistance to perform the condition, so that it is all of free grace from beginning to end, from the foundation to the topstone. The covenant of grace is, therefore, hereby enlarged, and contains more grace by the promise of saving mercy to the children of those who keep the covenant than if it contained no such promise. The parents who have been in this way the instruments of bringing salvation to their children, will forever admire and adore that infinite free grace which so constituted the covenant of grace as to include their children with them, and given them grace to be faithful in the covenant, and perform the condition on which the promise of salvation to their children was made, and by which it has been conveyed to them. The children who are saved in this way will forever celebrate and adore that sovereign grace of God, exercised towards them in constituting such a gracious covenant, and ordering that they should be born of such pious parents, by whom they were brought into covenant and dedicated to God, and in giving their parents a heart to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in this way giving them holiness and salvation. This is, therefore, so far from being inconsistent with salvation by free, sovereign grace, that it serves to display it, and instead of curtailing, it enlarges the covenant of grace.

Ques. 4. How are the children who are thus in covenant, and holy, in the sense explained, to be treated by the church?

Answer. Before they come to years of understanding, so as to be capable of acting in matters of religion for themselves, they are not to be admitted to receive the Lord's supper, because they are incapable of receiving any benefit by it, or of attending upon it in the manner and for the ends prescribed by Christ, viz., to do it in remembrance of him; but when they shall be able to act for themselves, the church of which they are members is to expect and require that they conduct as pious Christians, and profess and appear to understand the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and to be willing to obey Christ, in keeping all his commandments, and attending on all his insti-

tutions, to which they are to be admitted, and treated in all respects as the disciples of Christ. But if they be immoral, or neglect the duties of Christianity, and refuse or neglect to make a Christian profession, and attend upon the Lord's supper, the church is to use proper means to reclaim them, and bring them to their duty; and if they still neglect and refuse to hear the church and comply with their duty, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, and treated in all respects as any adult persons are to be treated, who have been members of the church, and are rejected for disobedience to the laws of Christ.

As soon as the children are capable of being taught, they are to be instructed and told what their standing is, what has been done for them, what will be expected and required of them when they come to act for themselves; that if they do not then say "I am the Lord's," and subscribe with their hand to the Lord, and comply with all the institutions of Christ, they will fall under the censure of the church, and be cast out, as unworthy of the station into which they were brought by their parents; and this is constantly to be held up to their view, and urged upon them.

It has been observed, that if the laws given by Moses to the congregation of Israel were strictly observed, no child who was disobedient to his parents, and refused to serve the Lord, could be suffered to live among them, for all such were to be put to death; and that this law was suited to have a constant and mighty influence on parents, to awaken and excite them to the greatest care, prudence, and faithfulness in educating their children; and on the minds of children, from their early days, to lead them to hearken to their parents and obey them, and to make it their great concern to fear and serve the Lord.

The Christian institution, now under consideration, is suited to answer the same end, and to have a salutary effect on the minds both of parents and their children. Though, under the milder dispensation of the gospel, no one is to be put to death for rejecting Christ and the gospel, even though he were before this a visible member of the Christian church, yet he is to be cut off, and cast out of the visible kingdom of Christ; and every child in the church, who grows up in disobedience to Christ, and in this most important concern will not obey his parents, is thus to be rejected and cut off, after all proper means are used by his parents and the church to reclaim him, and bring him to his duty. Such an event will be viewed by Christian parents as worse than death, or only to have a child taken out of the world by death, and is suited to be a constant, strong motive to concern, prayer, and fidelity respecting their

children and their education; and it tends to have an equally desirable effect on the minds of children, and must greatly impress the hearts of those who are in any degree considerate and serious.

Ques. 5. According to this plan, if children grow up and continue in a state of sin, and a course of disobedience to Christ, it must be owing to the parents' neglect and breach of covenant; must they not, therefore, be censured and excommunicated by the church, as well as their children, as covenant-breakers?

Answer. This question must be answered in the negative, for the following reasons: —

1. Though it be evident that parents have not done their duty to those of their children who grow up and continue in disobedience to Christ, and refuse to walk in the way in which they should go, yet if no course of actions, nor any particular overt act contrary to their duty, nor any gross, known and designed neglect of their duty to their children can be proved or alleged against them, there can be no ground of public censure.

2. Though it could be proved, and were known, that they had been guilty of many mistakes, much imprudence, and great neglects in the education of their children, and were far from doing their duty, and complying with all that is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and so had broken the covenant between God and them with respect to their duty to their children; yet this may be consistent with their being true believers or real Christians, and, therefore, cannot be a sufficient ground of censuring them, and casting them out of the church; for nothing can be the proper ground of such censure, but those overt acts, or that neglect of duty, which, if persisted in, is inconsistent with a person's being a real Christian. It has been observed, that a person may be a true believer, and be entitled to the blessings of the covenant of grace as to his own person, and yet not perform the condition of the covenant, as it respects his children; therefore, though the latter may be proved, this is no evidence against him, with respect to the former; consequently is not a ground of rejecting him as no Christian.

Ques. 6. It is a known truth, and often mentioned, that parents cannot give or convey grace to their children by any thing they can do. Is not the doctrine now advanced, which teaches that the holiness and salvation of children is the certain consequence of their parents' doing their duty to them, contrary to this truth?

Answer. It is true, that holiness is wrought in the heart by

the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, and cannot be communicated to children by any means or endeavors used by parents, but is wholly effected by divine influences. In this view and sense, parents do not convey grace to their children: this is wholly out of their power; it is the work of God. But it does not follow from this that God has not so constituted the covenant of grace, that holiness shall be communicated by him to the children, in consequence of the faithful, commanded endeavors of their parents; so that, in this sense, and by virtue of such a constitution, they do, by their faithful endeavors, convey saving blessings to their children.

In this way they give existence to their children. God produces their existence by his own almighty energy; but, by the constitution he has established, they receive their existence from their parents, or by their means. By an established constitution, parents convey moral depravity to their children; and if God has been pleased to make a constitution, and appoint a way in his covenant of grace with man, by which pious parents may convey and communicate moral rectitude or holiness to their children, they, by using the appointed means, do it as really and effectually as they communicate existence to them. In this sense, therefore, they may convey and give holiness and salvation to their children.

This is a maxim often mentioned by parents, when the faithful education of their children is brought into view and urged, that parents cannot give grace to their children, however faithful they are in their education. This is not true, in the sense now mentioned, if the covenant of grace contains a promise that their children shall be holy, if they will use all proper and commanded endeavors to this end, by which there is a constituted connection between such means and the end. And whether this has not been proved from Scripture, the reader will judge when he has considered what has now been offered on this point. There is reason to fear, and even to believe, that the above maxim is too often mentioned by parents in order to exculpate and excuse themselves from fault, when their children grow up ungoverned, ignorant, and vicious. In this view it is desirable it should be laid aside.

Ques. 7. If this be a doctrine plainly taught in Scripture, and explains and points out the meaning, design, and importance of the baptism of the children of believers, why has it not been understood and believed in all ages in the Christian church, but remained in the dark, and unknown till this time?

Ans. 1. It was taught by Christ and his apostles; as they said things which do necessarily imply it, as has been shown.

And it was, therefore, doubtless understood and believed in the churches constituted by the apostles, which, with other doctrines and practices enjoined by them, was soon corrupted, misunderstood, and, in a great measure, lost in darkness and error. And that this was an apostolic institution may be argued from the opinion which was handed down in the Christian church, that baptized infants were regenerated: and hence their baptism was called regeneration, which appears by the writings of those who lived in the second century of the Christian church and since. Though the true reason of baptized children being considered and called holy — viz., their being the children of parents who dedicated them to God, and had engaged to bring them up for God, on which condition they were to be holy and saved, according to the divine promise — was, soon after the days of the apostles, too generally overlooked and misunderstood, yet the doctrine that such children were to be considered to be regenerated and holy was still taught and believed, and has been embraced by many, even to this day. But, instead of understanding the true ground of this, and giving a rational and scriptural account of it, the most of them have either given no reason for it, or attributed it not to what the parents had done or should do for them, and the promise made to them in the covenant of grace upon their faithfulness, but to the efficacy of the ordinance of baptism itself, and thought that the bare administration of baptism would sanctify and save them, without regard to any condition to be performed by their parents or others.

Ans. 2. This doctrine has been expressly asserted by writers of this and the last centuries.* And many divines, if not

* "Baptism seals our introduction and initiation into the visible church and body of Christ, and our adoption to the heavenly inheritance." — *Calvin, Epist.* 185.

Dr. Thomas Goodwin, in his discourse on 1 Cor. vii. 14, — *Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy,* — says, "The meaning is this: that, whereas unbelievers' children are, in the account of the gospel and of God himself under the gospel, pronounced unclean, — that is, as remaining in the state in which they were born, viz., of sin and uncleanness, — on the contrary, (saith he,) *your* children, although born in sin, as others, are yet, by God's true sentence of them, in his word and revealed will, proclaimed *holy*, and so are to be judged of by us as truly regenerate and born again. He means, therefore, evangelical holiness; — that, though they be born in sin, as others are, yet they are, in part, sanctified, or regenerate, and made holy in state, and so are not in a state of sin, but of evangelical holiness.

"For the *terminus* or object of our thoughts, it is *real holiness;* that is, which we are to think real and true. Some divines have said that, because the church was to judge any such child holy, though all were not so, that, therefore, it is but a reputative holiness, and an outward, sacramental holiness, that we, in our judgments, are to give them. But they are mistaken; for though in the event, indeed, it proves in many of them but a reputative holiness, and only in esteem, yet, still, so as the *terminus* of the church's judgment, or

most, who have written in favor of infant baptism, have said that which really implies this doctrine, while they assert that the children of believers are received into covenant with their parents, and have a visible title to the promise of the covenant, — which is, that God will be a God to them, or their God, — and, therefore, are *federally holy*, which implies the whole that has been now advanced on this point, if these words be taken in any proper consistent sense, or if, indeed, they have any real meaning. It cannot be denied, indeed, that many of these same authors have passed over this point without an explanation, or have so explained this assertion as to leave it without any consistent sense, or nothing but words without any meaning, and have denied that to be the meaning which is the only natural and consistent one.

Ans. 3. If this doctrine were wholly neglected and lost ever since the age in which the apostles lived, and had not been revived or thought of till this time, or even till the millennium shall commence, this would be no argument against the truth of it, whenever, upon inquiry, it be found to be contained in the Bible.

Those doctrines and duties of Christianity which are most contrary to the selfishness, pride, worldliness, and the various natural corrupt inclinations of men, are most exposed to be soon rejected and lost, or greatly corrupted; and though once taught and established, and continuing to be contained in divine revelation, will be neglected and discarded when the

that holiness which they are, in their judgments, to attribute to them, is true, real holiness, — but it is called reputative only in respect to the event, in that we should attribute true holiness to those who prove not so, (yet still the holiness we are to think in them is no other than real to our thoughts, even as it is in our judging those of riper years to be saints, when admitted into churches,) — it follows not that it is a mere outward holiness that is to be the *terminus* of our thoughts, or that which we are to content ourselves to find in them, or think of them, but that they are truly and really holy, though, in the event, it proves no other, in many, than an outward, titular holiness: yet the holiness we pitch upon, and aim at, and judge of, and embrace men for, is a holiness to our judgments real, though we be often mistaken." — *Dr. Goodwin's Works*, Vol. II. Of Election, pp. 406, 422.

The Assembly of Divines, at Westminster, in the Shorter Catechism, composed by them, say, "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the blessings of the covenant of grace*, and our engagement to be the Lord's." And in the next sentence say, "The infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized." This catechism is received by the church of Scotland, and by all or most of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in England, Ireland, and America, and taught to their children. If baptism signifies and seals what it is here said to do, then infants, when they are baptized, are visibly, or, in the view of the church, ingrafted into Christ, and partakers of the blessings of the covenant of grace; which is the same with being entitled to holiness and salvation on some condition, which, if not expressed, is supposed and understood.

power and spirit of true religion declines; and they will not be long maintained and practised in their original purity and strictness in Christian churches, unless divine influences be granted, to form the hearts of successive generations to discern and love the truth and practise it. This observation has been verified by fact and experience. The Christian church, in general, soon became corrupt, and sunk into darkness and error, in principles and practice, after the days of the apostles; and this declension and apostasy from the truth once delivered to the saints became greater and more general as the spirit of true religion vanished, and error in doctrine, and superstition and corruption in practice, increased. There were, from time to time; some degree of partial revivals of truth and religion, and particular men were raised up to investigate and declare some of the most important truths contained in the Bible, and oppose the general corruption in Christian doctrine and duty; and this took place to a remarkable degree and extent in the reformation from popery. But who will presume to say or think, that any of the different sects and denominations of Christians in the Protestant world have come up to the purity in doctrine and practice of the primitive church; or that the Bible is yet understood in all the important branches of truth and duty, as they are there revealed? Christians in general are still in a great degree of darkness, and much of the light held up in the Bible is not received, through the inattention, prejudices, and blindness of men. The Scripture has not been so well and so fully understood, as it will be in the days of the millennium, when the Spirit of God shall be poured out on Christians in general, in much greater degrees than it has been, by which they shall have more discerning, and be disposed to search the Bible with a sincere and earnest desire to know the truth, and a strong disposition to receive it, and practise agreeable to it. The Bible will then be improved to much better purpose than it had ever been before, and many important truths and duties, which had in ages before not been understood or seen, will then appear plain and easy to be understood. Then the Bible will answer the end for which it is given to men, as it never had done before, as it was chiefly designed for that day, by the proper improvement of which, the knowledge of God and of all revealed truth will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The doctrine now under consideration may be then well understood by all, and the evidence of it appear much more strong and clear than it can be made to do now, and being reduced to practice, the good effect of it will be seen, as has been observed above. This doctrine, taken in its full length

and breadth, when reduced to a practice agreeable to it, is directly contrary to the natural disposition of man, and peculiarly so in many respects; and it is not expected that, however evident the truth of it is from the Bible, it will be generally believed, and that it will be received and properly conformed to and practised by many churches, if by any, in the Christian world, at this day. Religion, even the true spirit of Christianity, must rise much higher than it now does, in order to practise the duties implied in the baptism of infants, and many other duties which are commanded, and ought to take place among Christians and in Christian churches.

Ques. 8. If a right account of infant baptism has now been given, then the baptism of children of believers is an institution of vast importance and an indispensable duty, as well as a great privilege; and they who deny that infant baptism is a Christian institution, and refuse to practise it, are very erroneous and wicked. Ought they not, therefore, to be rejected as no Christians?

Answer. They who believe the baptism of infants is evidently a Christian institution, and think it to be as important and useful, and suited and designed by Christ to be of such advantage to parents and their children and to the church, as has been represented above, must look upon those who refuse to comply with this institution, but oppose it, as in a great error, and as offending Christ and those little ones, who, being the children of believing parents, ought to be considered and received as believers in him. (See Matt. xviii. 5, 6. Luke ix. 48.) But they are to be thought of and treated with great candor, tenderness, and Christian charity; especially since there is reason to believe that most, if not all, who believe in the baptism of children, and practise it, are more guilty and offensive to Christ, in their treatment of this institution, than the anti-Pedobaptists are. The Pedobaptists believe infant baptism to be a divine institution, and baptize their children; but most of them, if not all, refuse to comply with and practise the most important and essential duties implied in the institution, which they solemnly profess and engage to do. They make use of the external rite, but treat it as a mere ceremony, because it is the custom of their denomination, or to gratify their pride or superstition: they generally show that they do not heartily devote their children to Christ, by their neglect to educate them for him. In this respect, their children are not distinguished from those who are not baptized; and let them behave as they will, they are not treated as being under the care of the church, or subjects of discipline, and most, if not all the parents who bring their children to baptism, do not

desire they should be censured and cast out by the church, if, when they are adult, they refuse to obey Christ, but stand ready to oppose it. It is a common practice to baptize the children of those who are not visible believers, who do not obey Christ, in attending upon all his institutions, and, in many instances, are in other respects immoral; and in those churches where no children are baptized but of parents who make a profession of religion, and are members of the church, the baptism of children is generally treated as a mere ceremony. When that is performed, no more is done for the children by the parents or the church than is done for those who are not baptized. How short do they come of the duty which is reasonable and important, and solemnly engaged by the parents and the church, if the above representation of this duty be in any measure just! How greatly is this institution abused and perverted even to bad purposes, by most of the Pedobaptists! The error and sin of the anti-Pedobaptists consists in their not believing infant baptism to be an institution of Christ, and therefore rejecting it as a mere human invention. Theirs is a sin of ignorance. Their ignorance and unbelief are criminal; but who are the greatest criminals in their treatment of this institution, it is easy to determine.

The words of Christ to them who brought to him a woman guilty of adultery, and said Moses commanded such to be stoned, are applicable to this case: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Too many of the Pedobaptists have treated those who deny infant baptism with unreasonable censoriousness and severity; especially since they themselves have been so faulty in this very matter, and have denied or neglected, in principle and practice, the most useful, important, and essential part of this institution. To such may be applied the words of the prophet Oded to the host of Israel, with a little variation: "Ye have condemned and censured your brethren, with a severity and rage that reacheth up to heaven. But are there not with *you*, even *with you*, sins against the Lord your God?" (2 Chron. xxviii. 9, 10.)

This subject will be concluded by observing, that what has been offered from the Scripture to prove that the baptism of infants is a divine institution, and whatever other arguments from it have been mentioned by others, or may be thought of, stand good, and ought to be considered in their full weight, independent of what has been now said, to show what is the design and import of this institution, and whether this can be sufficiently supported from Scripture or not; though it is thought that the view which has been here given of it, if it be admitted, will serve to strengthen the evidence that it is an in-

stitution of Christ, and to show the propriety and importance of it. Therefore, they who shall not be convinced that there is any promised connection between the faithfulness of parents in the covenant, as it respects their children, and the conveyance of saving blessings to the latter, will not find the evidence on which they believe and practise infant baptism, in any degree weakened; while they who believe that such a connection is evident from Scripture, will, by this view of the matter, be more confirmed in the reality, usefulness, and importance of this institution, and excited to improve it accordingly. It is presumed that this attempt has no tendency to prejudice any one against the practice of infant baptism, or to lead him to doubt whether it be a Christian institution; and that no one can have any reason to think that the belief of such a connection, and a practice agreeable to it, can tend, in any respect, to slur the institution, or to render it less important and useful to the Christian church, or be hurtful to any.

If what has been now offered on this subject shall in any degree awaken the attention of divines and Christians in general to this matter, and excite to a more careful and strict examination of it, which, it is thought, has not yet been thoroughly explored, but has been generally treated in too loose and indeterminate a manner; and if, in consequence of this, greater light on this point shall be obtained, and a more consistent and scriptural account of it shall be given than is here exhibited, the composing and reading of these pages will not be in vain.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Lord's supper is also an institution of Christ, which he has commanded his followers to observe and attend upon, and has appointed it to be celebrated in his church to the end of the world.

The elements of this ordinance are bread and wine. The bread, consecrated and broken, represents the broken body of Christ in his death on the cross. The wine poured out represents his blood in his death, which was shed for the remission of sins. The professed followers of Christ, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, when consecrated and blessed by prayer and thanksgiving, and distributed to them by the officers of the church, do, by this transaction, profess cordially to receive Christ by faith, and to live upon him, loving him and trusting in him for pardon and complete redemption, consecrating themselves to his service. And by the ministers of the gospel consecrating those elements, and ordering them to be distrib-

uted to the communicants, Christ is exhibited as an all-sufficient Savior, and the promise of salvation is expressed and sealed to all his friends. This is, therefore, a covenant transaction, in which those who partake of the bread and wine express their faith in Christ, — that they are his friends and devoted to his service, and their cordial compliance with the covenant of grace, — and solemnly seal this covenant by partaking of these elements; and, at the same time, they are a token and seal of the covenant of grace on the part of Christ. All this is asserted by the apostle Paul, when speaking of this ordinance. "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) "For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of ME. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, *This cup is the new testament in my blood.*" (1 Cor. xi. 23–25.) And the church, by coming together and celebrating this holy supper, not only profess their love to Christ and union of heart to him, but that peculiar love and union to each other which takes place between the true disciples of Christ, and is essential to their character. This is expressed in the following words of the apostle Paul: "For we, being many, are *one bread* and *one body:* for we are all partakers of that *one bread.*" (1 Cor. x. 17.)

The appointment, therefore, of this holy supper is an instance of the wisdom and goodness of Christ, as it is suited to be a repeated and continual exhibition of a crucified Savior, and hereby to excite the faith and love of Christians, and to lead them to renew their covenant with him, dedicating themselves to his service and honor; and is also adapted to the communicants' united expression of their mutual love and union of heart to each other, while they jointly partake of one common good, even all the benefits of Christ crucified.

That this is appointed by Christ to be a standing ordinance, to be observed by his church, and by every professed baptized believer in him, to the end of the world, is evident by the words and manner of the institution of it recorded by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and is further evident by the history we have of the observation of it by the churches in the days of the apostles. We are told that, on the first day of the week, the disciples at Troas came together to break bread, (Acts xx. 7,) that is, to celebrate the Lord's supper. The

church at Corinth attended upon this ordinance from time to time, which appears from what the apostle Paul says to them respecting it, when he undertakes to correct their abuse of it. (1 Cor. xi.) And in order to reform them, he refers them to the original institution by Christ, and tells them particularly what it was, as he had received it from the Lord Jesus Christ himself; and adds the following words: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come;*" which words strongly assert that this ordinance was to be observed to the end of the world, when Christ the Lord shall come the second time without sin unto salvation.

This ordinance, according to the nature, signification, and extent of it, is to be repeated by the same persons to the end of life, as it expresses the believer's living upon Christ, and the nourishment of his soul by faith in him, and is suited to excite renewed acts of Christian love and holiness. There is the same reason why a participation of it should be repeated, as there is that it should be once attended. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. xi. 26.) There is a difference between this ordinance and that of baptism, in this respect: as the latter is the initiating ordinance and seal by which persons are visibly introduced into the church and kingdom of Christ; and this being *once* done, the end of it is answered, and there can be no reason or propriety in repeating it by applying it more than once to the same person.

The infant children of believers are as capable subjects of baptism, and of all that is signified by it, as adults are, as has been shown. But, as they are not capable of that which is signified by partaking of the Lord's supper till they arrive to years of understanding, this is not to be administered to them before that time, when they shall be able to "discern the Lord's body, and examine themselves." There is no evidence that the circumcised children in Israel were admitted to the passover, and to partake of the paschal lamb, until they were able to understand the reason and end of that institution. The Jews say, children did not partake of the passover till they arrived to the age of twelve years. This seems to be confirmed by the history we have of the parents of Jesus taking him with them to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem when he was twelve years old, which plainly implies that they did not do it before. "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast." (Luke ii. 41, 42.) This may be considered as a guide to Christian churches in admitting baptized children to the Lord's supper.

This ordinance, according to the nature and design of it, is to be administered and attended upon *publicly* by every particular church, and is not designed to be administered privately to one single person. Of this we have no example in Scripture; but the disciples, the whole church, *came together* to break bread, and eat the Lord's supper. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples *came together to break bread*." (Acts xx. 7.) "When ye *come together* therefore *into one place*, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. Wherefore, my brethren, *when ye come together to eat*, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; *that ye come not together* unto condemnation." (1 Cor. xi. 20, 33, 34.)

As to the frequency of administering this ordinance in a church, this does not appear to be fixed by any precept or example in Scripture, and, therefore, seems to be left to the discretion of the church to determine how often they will attend upon it, and have it administered to them, according to their circumstances, and as they shall think it to be most convenient to them, and most for the honor of Christ and their edification. It has been often said that Christians, in the first ages of the church, celebrated the Lord's supper at least every Lord's day. But it may be asked by what authentic history this can be made evident? what author has produced this evidence? and if it were certain that some churches did attend upon it every Lord's day, and oftener, this would not prove that this was commanded by Christ, or his apostles. Some have thought it evident that this ordinance was attended by the first Christian church, which was formed by the apostles at Jerusalem, at least every first day of the week, — if not every time they met for public worship, which they must have done by the direction of the apostles, — and is, therefore, as binding on all Christian churches, to the end of the world, as if there were an express precept to attend upon it in the same manner and so often. But the words on which this conclusion is grounded do not appear sufficient to support it when carefully examined. They are these: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." (Acts ii. 42, 46.) "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine;" that is, they attended constantly on the instructions and preaching of the apostles, and steadfastly adhered to the truths delivered by them. "And in fellowship;" that is, in communicating and making collections and distribution to supply the bodily necessities of those who stood

in need of assistance and support. This is the meaning of the word, κοινωνια, which is here translated *fellowship*. "And in breaking of bread:" this probably means their partaking of the Lord's supper. "And in prayers;" that is, joining in public prayers, and in singing psalms, which is included in prayer; which were constantly performed when they attended the other parts of public worship. Here, then, every part of their public worship is mentioned, viz., public teaching; distribution to the necessities of the poor saints; attendance on the Lord's supper; and prayer; including psalmody, which is devotion, and a particular manner of prayer. But it does not follow, from this enumeration of the different parts of their public worship, that every part was attended upon every time they met for prayer or preaching; or that they made a contribution for the poor, or broke bread, every time they met together for public worship; but that these were performed as often as was convenient and proper. Breaking bread from house to house, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, (verse 46,) does not appear to mean their eating the Lord's supper from house to house, but their partaking of their common food, and eating together; exercising liberality and friendship one towards another, in eating their common meals. But if breaking bread does here mean the Lord's supper, and it were certain that believers at Jerusalem did, in their then peculiar and extraordinary circumstances, administer and partake of this ordinance whenever a number of them met in a particular house, it would not hence follow that the disciples of Christ are by this bound in all ages of the world to attend the Lord's supper in the same manner, or thus frequently.

When it is said, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread," (Acts xx. 7,) it does not import that breaking bread was the only or chief thing for which they came together on that day, for this was not true, as appears by the relation; nor does it follow from those words, that they always came together on the first day of the week to break bread: it is only said that on *that* first day they did so. They might, consistently with this, come together on many other first days of the week, not to break bread, but to attend on other parts of public worship, without partaking of the Lord's supper.

Section IV.

Concerning the Discipline of the Church.

The discipline of a church consists in their admitting or rejecting those who offer themselves to join with them; in the members watching over each other; in reproving and admonishing those who walk disorderly, and taking all proper methods to reform them; and in rejecting those who will not be reclaimed, but continue obstinate and unreformed, when all proper means have been previously used to bring them to repentance.

The proper exercise of discipline is important and necessary in order to the comfort, edification, and prosperity of a church; and where this is wholly neglected in a church, it will go to ruin, and such a society is not worthy of the name of a Christian church. Therefore, this is particularly enjoined by Christ and his apostles.

The following particulars may serve to illustrate this subject: —

I. In the exercise of discipline, the church is to be wholly governed by the laws of Christ. He is the only lawgiver in his church, and in exercising discipline, Christians are to execute his laws, and have no authority or right to do any thing, unless it be agreeable to his direction and command; and whatsoever is done by the church in his name, and according to his laws, is done by authority derived from him, as they are authorized by him to execute his laws: but when, and so far as they deviate from this, they have no authority, and what they do is null and void, and disapproved by him.

II. The power to execute the laws of Christ is not given by him to any one man, or to any particular class or order of men in the church, but to the church, as a particular and distinct society; though some particular members or officers in the church may, in many instances, have a distinguished influence and lead in the transactions of the church, and put into execution their decisions. When the head of the church said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," (Matt. xvi. 19,) we are not to suppose that this commission and authority was given to Peter alone, or to the apostles only, or to any distinct succession of men or officers in the church; but to the church which Peter represented in the confession he had then just made, and of

which Christ speaks in the preceding words: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And what Christ says in the next chapter confirms the truth of this supposition; for when he is there speaking of the doing of the church, in censuring and excommunicating an offender, he repeats the words above mentioned, which he had spoken to Peter, and gives this same authority to the church and sanction to their doings, according to his laws: "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." (Chap. xvii. 18.) Two things appear evident from hence. In the first place, that Christ did not give this commission and authority to Peter only, in distinction from the rest of his disciples, but to them all, as much as to Peter; and in the next place, that this authority was given to them, not as a distinct order of men in his church, but as his disciples, and his church, as they composed the only church which Christ then had on earth, from whom all the professed disciples of Christ, and members of his visible church, have descended as their successors, being the followers of Christ, and members of his church, as his first disciples were. Therefore, this power and authority is given to the church, and is to continue in it as long as there is a church on earth, even to the end of the world.

III. This authority, therefore, to maintain and execute the laws of Christ, is given to the church as a body or society, each member of the church having an equal concern and right to judge and act in all decisions to be made by the church, in the exercise of discipline; and the act of the majority is to be considered as the act of the church, as no society can decide and act in any other way; and that the whole church are in this way to judge, decide, and act, is evident from Scripture. When our Savior is giving particular directions respecting discipline, he gives the authority to judge and act to the church, as a society, and not to any particular member of it. "Tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) According to this, every matter is to come before the church, and is to be decided by the judgment and voice of the church, as a body; which cannot be done in any other way but by the judgment and voice of all the members of it, or of the majority. Agreeable to this are the words of the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth, when he gave them direction to discipline a particular member of the church, who had been guilty of a scandalous crime. "In the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ, *when ye are gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan." (1 Cor. v. 4, 5.) This was to be done by the church; in order to which, they must all come together, that it might be the act of the church; and in the whole that he says on this subject, he speaks to the whole church as concerned and acting in this matter. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, etc., with such a one, no not to eat. Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore, put away from yourselves that wicked person." And when they had rebuked and excommunicated this person, the apostle speaks of it as being done by them all, or the majority of the church. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted by many," or by the most, or major part, as the word may properly be rendered. (2 Cor. ii. 6.) And he speaks the same language to other churches, when treating of this subject: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies." (Rom. xvi. 17, 18.) "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received of us; and if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.) Hence it appears, that when this same apostle directs Timothy and Titus, respecting the exercise of discipline in the churches in which they presided, he does not mean that they had any authority in the matter over the churches, but that they should excite and lead the churches to a proper care and conduct in the strict and faithful exercise of discipline; for in any other view and sense, he would be inconsistent with himself.

It has been observed, that in every decision and act of the church, in the exercise of discipline, there must be the voice of the major part, or greatest number of the church at least; and every such act is to be considered as the act of that particular society or church. But it is desirable that the church should be unanimous in all their decisions and votes; and, therefore, all proper and possible care and pains ought to be taken to effect and maintain this unanimity in all their proceedings; and when this cannot be obtained, and there appears a difference in judgment among the members of the church,

and a number do not view the case before them in the same light with the majority, they are to be treated with love and tenderness, and the latter ought to use all proper means to enlighten and convince their dissenting brethren, that they may think and act with them, and manifest a reluctance to proceed and act without their concurrence and consent; and, if possible, persuade them at least to say they are willing the majority should act as they think best, and though they cannot see with them at present, they will not be offended, nor are disposed to make any division or uneasiness in the church.

And the minority, who cannot act with their brethren in any instance, when they have offered the reasons of their dissent in meekness and love, ought to acquiesce in the decision of the church, so as to take no offence, or do any thing to interrupt the peace of the church, unless they consider the case to be so important, and the proceedings of the majority so contrary to the laws of Christ, that they ought to remonstrate, and think they cannot be faithful to Christ and their brethren unless they take some further steps. In such a case it will be the duty of the church to join with the dissatisfied in asking judgment and advice of other churches; and in any instance, where the matter to be decided is intricate or difficult, or when the person concerning whom the decision is to be made, desires it, it is proper and wise to ask the advice of other churches, in order to get all the light and help they can obtain respecting the matter to be determined. But every particular church, after asking counsel and advice, and making the best improvement of it they can, must act according to their own judgment, they not being bound implicitly to submit to the dictates of any other churches or councils, as having authority to decide for them in any matter, or any further than they receive light and conviction.

IV. The females are included in the male members of the church, and are to act only by them, as thus included; or the males act for them, and the women are not to dictate and vote in the church, in any matter which is to be decided, as this would be usurping and exercising that authority over the men which is forbidden in Scripture, and is inconsistent with that state of inferiority to men, which God has, for wise reasons, constituted, by which they are not to rule, but to be in subjection. But they have a right to know all the concerns and proceedings of the church, as they are equally interested in them with the male members, and it is desirable that they should be satisfied with all the transactions of the church, and know the reasons on which they proceed. They have, therefore, a right to be present in all the meetings of the church,

and ought to attend with the males, and give all the light and evidence they can in any case in which it is desired, and may propose any difficulty or uneasiness in their minds respecting the proceedings of the church, in order to get information and satisfaction; and they have a right to be regarded and treated with respect and kindness by the brethren, who ought to give the sisters all the light and satisfaction in their power, in every case.

When a particular church is to be formed and constituted in any place, the proposed members of it are to satisfy each other that they are so far agreed in their understanding and judgment respecting the Bible, as to the doctrines and truths therein revealed, so far as they regard faith and practice, and that they have such a practical acquaintance with the Christian religion, and that their life and conversation are so far agreeable to the commands of Christ, that they can receive each other as real Christians to a state of church fellowship, and agree to walk in all the commands of Christ, and in attendance on his worship and ordinances. By this they are prepared to unite in a confession of their faith, or of their understanding and belief of the important and essential doctrines contained in divine revelation, and of the institutions and duties which Christ has appointed; and to enter into mutual and solemn covenant to walk in the ways and ordinances of Christ blameless, and to assist and watch over each other in their Christian practice, and in the exercise of that discipline which Jesus Christ has instituted, to prevent corruption and apostasy in the church in doctrine or practice, and for their mutual edification in love; and when the necessary officers of a church are chosen and ordained, they are prepared to attend upon all the institutions of Christ, and to exercise that discipline which he has appointed.

In the exercise of this discipline, they are to admit or reject those who offer to join with them as members of their Christian society; which is to be done with care, discerning, and judgment. After proper acquaintance with such, and a careful examination into their knowledge and belief of the most important doctrines of revelation, and their experimental acquaintance with them, and cordial approbation of them; if they appear to the church to understand and approve of those doctrines which they hold important and necessary to be understood and believed in order to be real Christians, and to be willing to devote themselves to Christ and observe all his commandments, and to make public profession of this, and enter into a solemn covenant to obey all the commands of Christ as members of that church, they are to receive them as real

Christians, so far as they are warranted to judge and determine; but if they appear to them ignorant of the essential truths and doctrines of the gospel, or not to believe them, or do not appear to have embraced them cordially and experimentally, or if their temper and conduct have not been agreeable to the gospel, and they do not manifest a disposition to repent and reform, they are to be rejected, as not appearing to be real Christians; and, therefore, unworthy to be visible members of a Christian church.

When any who are members of the church shall fall from their profession and Christian character by embracing error, or any unchristian practice, of which there is sufficient evidence, and after proper methods taken with them to bring them to repentance and reclaim them, without success, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, as unworthy of a place in the visible church of Christ; but may afterwards be received again, upon their giving proper evidence of true repentance.

There is to be special care taken of the children of the church, viz., the children of those parents who are or have been members of the church, who have dedicated them to Christ in the ordinance of baptism, and have been received by the church as visible members of Christ, the lambs in his flock, in the manner and on the grounds which have been before explained. Every adult member of the church ought to be concerned that these should have a Christian education, and watch over one another with respect to this, and direct, admonish, and exhort those who appear negligent and deficient in their duty to their children; and every gross and continued neglect ought to subject the person guilty to the censure of the church. And when the children arrive to an age in which they are capable of acting for themselves in matters of religion, and making a profession of their adherence to the Christian faith and practice, and coming to the Lord's supper; if they neglect and refuse to do this, and act contrary to the commands of Christ in any other respect, all proper means are to be used and methods taken to bring them to repentance, and to do their duty as Christians; and if they cannot be reclaimed, but continue impenitent and unreformed, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, as other adult members are, who persist in disobedience to Christ.

V. The general rule of exercising discipline towards those members who give offence in words or conduct, and which is applicable to every case, is given by Jesus Christ in the following words: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear

thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 15–17.)

It has been supposed by some, if not generally, that this direction respects private and personal offences only, and that it is not applicable to general and public offences. But perhaps this will appear to be a mistake, when the matter is properly considered, and that the method and steps here pointed out are to be taken with every offender, as most agreeable to the dictates of Christian love, and best suited to reclaim such, and the most proper regulation and guard to prevent unreasonable and frivolous complaints being brought to the church.

When a member of the church acts contrary to his Christian profession, and transgresses any of the laws of Christ, and walks disorderly, he trespasses or sins * against every brother in the church, and offends him as really and as much as if he injured him in particular in his person, character, or estate; and there is the same reason and obligation to take steps to reclaim him as if his trespass were against one individual only. And if his sin be not of a private, but of a public nature, and is known to many, or to all, this is no reason why every person should not feel the trespass against him, and be ready to take proper steps to bring him to repentance, and be the first to apply to him to that end, unless particular circumstances render it more proper and convenient for some other person to do it.

And however public the offence may be, every individual ought to be disposed to make private application to him first, unless some other person shall do it, before he speaks of it to others; and to consider this as necessary in order to obey the command of Christ and the law of love, which ought to govern in every step taken in such a case. Perhaps the person offending does not view what he has done in a true light, or think himself guilty of unchristian conduct, or does not know that others are offended with him; and if he should have his crime properly set before him in a private way, he might be made sensible of what he had done, and that he had given

* The word in the original, αμαρτηση, translated *trespass*, is the word which is used for *sinning*. It is so translated in the 21st verse. "How often shall my brother *sin* against me, and I forgive him?" And it is so translated in the following passage: "But when ye *sin* so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." (1 Cor. viii. 12.) And it is to be observed, that by sinning against the brethren, he does not mean any particular personal injury or offence.

just offence, and voluntarily make Christian satisfaction by a public confession, without any public accusation or process before the church. If the brethren were all under the proper influence of Christian love, and felt that concern and tenderness towards an offending brother which is the attendant of such love, such a method would doubtless appear most agreeable to them, and they would be ready to take it whenever there is opportunity and a call to do it; and it will be peculiarly agreeable to them to have a brother who has sinned reclaimed in such a private and easy way. And it is presumed there is no Christian who is a member of a church, who would not wish to be treated in this manner, if he should in any instance give offence to any or all of his brethren; and who would not think it a privilege to be in union with brethren who would deal thus privately and tenderly with him, whenever he should give them any just or supposed ground of offence; and, therefore, if he should neglect to take this method with any of his brethren who should give offence to him, he would not do to him as he would desire others to do to himself, and so transgress the law of love, and this wise law of Christ, which commands Christians to endeavor to heal every offence in the most private, easy, and tender manner. It may be the supposed offender will satisfy his offended brother that he is innocent, and has really given no ground of offence; but if he be not able to do this, and be not made sensible of his fault, and so do not hear his brother, he must take one or two of his brethren, whom he thinks most likely to convince and gain the offender, as this is most agreeable to Christian love, and best suited to answer the end. If they, when they have heard and considered the case, judge there is just ground of offence, and do convince the offender of it, and persuade him to make Christian satisfaction, the faulty brother is gained. If they judge that there is no sufficient ground of offence, or no proper evidence of the fact with which he is charged, the matter cannot be carried any further and laid before the church. If they think there is just ground of offence, and evidence of the fact of which he is accused, but cannot convince the offender of it, and, therefore, judge it ought to be laid before the church, the way is prepared to bring a complaint to the church, which ought to be received when it comes to them by the approbation of two or three, and not otherwise. And thus, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word is established." They are witnesses which ought to have great weight with the person's conscience with whom they deal, and which is suited to convince him, and bring him to his duty, if they condemn him. They are witnesses to the church, that

private methods have been taken to convince and reclaim him; that he will not hear them, and that he ought to be called to an account by the church; and in this way, the church go on proper and safe ground in receiving a complaint against any of the members, and proceeding to call the accused person before them, in order to hear and judge of the matter of which he is accused; and there is a proper guard placed against accusations being brought to the church by individuals, which might be wholly without any foundation, which would give needless trouble to the church, and might be very injurious to those against whom the complaints are made.

On the whole, it will doubtless appear to all who well consider the matter, that the rule our Savior has given, in the words under consideration, extends to all instances of offences given by any professing Christians; and that no person can, according to this, be called before the church to answer for any fault, whether private or public, unless a complaint be brought against him in the way here prescribed; and that the wisdom and goodness of Christ appears in forming this short and plain rule of proceeding in all such cases, which is perfectly agreeable to the law of *love*, and is in the best manner suited to promote the peace and edification of the church, and the good of every individual member; and, consequently, every deviation from this rule is contrary to the law of Christian benevolence, and tends to evil.*

VI. When the accused person is thus regularly brought before the church, if they judge he is censurable, and he remains impenitent, and will not hear them, or if he refuse to

* It has been supposed by some, that the direction in this passage to go to an offending brother, "and tell him his fault between thee and him *alone*," is applicable to no case but such wherein none knows of the fault of which the brother is guilty but the person who applies to him. But this cannot be true; for in such a case he would not be able to prove to the church, or any one, that his brother has been guilty of any fault; and, therefore, has no right to take one or two more to deal with him, or to speak of it to any person in the world. It must remain a secret between him and his brother, and to tell it to others would be a violation of the law of love, and a real slander, and would expose himself to suffer as a slanderer of his brother, having spread an evil report of him which he cannot prove. Therefore, in the case of a trespass mentioned by Christ in this passage, it is supposed that it can be proved by other witnesses than him who tells him his fault, or those whom he takes with him in the second step, otherwise he cannot take such a step; and it is so secret that, though he knew the fact to be true, he may not speak of it to any one, and cannot be a matter of public discipline.

If it be asked what an offended brother can do in such a case, the answer is plain and easy. He ought to deal with his faulty brother privately, and try to convince and awaken his conscience, and bring him to repentance; but if he remain obstinate, he must leave the matter in secret till the day of judgment, and continue to treat his brother before the world, and in the church, as visibly in good standing, and a visible Christian, as he really is, whatever be the secret sins of which he is guilty.

appear and answer to the complaint, when desired, he is to be rejected and cast out of the church, and cannot be restored again, without a proper manifestation of repentance. This is expressed by Christ in the following words: "But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." That is, consider and treat him as you are accustomed to view and treat heathens and publicans. The apostle Paul expresses the same thing in the following words: "I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat." (1 Cor. v. 11.) And to the same purpose he says again: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us; and if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.) The Jews avoided the company of heathens and publicans, and did not eat their common meals with them; and in the above passage, Christ commands the members of his churches to treat those who will not hear the church in the same manner; and the same thing is enjoined by St. Paul, when he commands the church at Corinth not to keep company with such, *no not to eat.* He tells them he did not forbid their keeping company with the wicked men of the world, for this would be inconsistent with their living in the world; but if he, who had the name of a Christian brother, transgressed the rules of Christ, and fell from his profession, they should renounce him, and not only exclude him from the privileges of a visible Christian in the church, but treat him with peculiar neglect and slight, and avoid his company at all times, and never so much as eat with him at a common table; as suited to keep in his view his character and situation in the sight of Christians, and to excite those feelings and that shame which tended to bring him to repentance.

Such a treatment of an excommunicated person is proper and necessary, in order to answer the ends of the censures of the church, so as to have their desired effect. By this their authority is exercised, maintained, and kept in view, and their particular abhorrence of the character and conduct of the censured person is constantly expressed to him and to the world, and the distinction between him and those who are in good standing, and his awful situation, is made manifest in all their conduct towards him; and it is suited constantly to affect and impress his mind, to give him uneasiness in his situation, to

make him ashamed, and bring him to repentance. Thus the salutary ends of the censures of the church are in this way answered, both with respect to the church, the excommunicated person, and the world.

VII. The brother who commits a fault, by which he falls under the censure of the church, may be restored to good standing again by reformation, a public confession, and profession of repentance, and not without this.

Some have thought that a confession before the church only is sufficient in order to a person's being restored to good standing, and that this is all that can be reasonably required. But it ought to be considered, that the church is a public society, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid, and their light is to shine before others. When a Christian falls from his profession in his conduct, he puts out his light *before others*, as well as in the sight of the church, and cannot recover it and cause it to shine again but by a profession of repentance and condemnation of himself before them, or in their sight; and a true penitent will desire to do this before all to whom the knowledge of his crime may have come, and wish all may know that he does repent. A contrary disposition to this is found only in the impenitent.

VIII. It is to be observed, that Jesus Christ has not given to his church any authority to inflict any corporeal punishment on men for disobedience to his laws; to imprison or fine them, or subject them to any worldly inconvenience, except what is implied in casting them out of the church, and treating them in the manner mentioned above.

All that has been done of this kind in the Christian world, by the professed followers of Christ, has been an abuse and violation of the laws of Christ, and has proceeded wholly from an anti-Christian spirit. The kingdom of Christ is in this respect, as well as others, *not of this world.*

IX. On the whole, it is observable, that the prevalence of the spirit of Christian love is necessary in order to the proper and useful practice of discipline in the churches of Christ. Christ and his apostles have insisted much on this, as that without which the laws of Christ cannot be obeyed in any degree. It is this alone by which the disciples and church of Christ are to be distinguished from the men and the societies of the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 35.) Where a spirit of true Christian love prevails, it will be natural and easy to obey the laws of Christ respecting the discipline to be exercised in his church; it will appear important and necessary that these laws should be observed and executed

with great care and strictness, and the good effect will be apparent. By this the church will edify itself in love, and become "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." And when this spirit of Christian love is not in exercise, the proper practice of discipline will not take place; and all attempts to practise it will proceed from selfishness, pride, and a worldly spirit, and promote confusion, divisions, and contention, rather than peace and edification, which has been verified in too many instances.

CHAPTER XV.

ON CHRISTIAN PRACTICE.

Every doctrine which comes into the system of truth, exhibited in divine revelation, and which has been brought into view in the preceding work, is, in a greater or less degree, practical; and the whole, considered in a collective view, do lead to, and involve, every thing essential in the whole system of Christian exercise and practice, which consists wholly in practising the truth, or walking in the truth. (John iii. 21. 2 John 4. 3 John 3, 4.) This will, therefore, serve as a help and guide in the brief delineation of this, which is now proposed.

The temper and exercises of a Christian, which take place in the view of revealed truth, have been in some measure brought into view and described already. They consist summarily and most essentially in *love;* in loving God with all their heart, and loving their neighbor as themselves. Christian practice consists in expressing and acting out this affection on all occasions, in every suitable way, in obedience to all the holy laws of God. The Christian owes perfect obedience at all times, as he always did before he was a Christian, and which all men do. His becoming a Christian, and obtaining pardon and the divine favor, is so far from freeing him from obligation to obey the laws of God perfectly, that his obligation to this is hereby greatly increased.

There is no real obedience, or any thing morally good or evil, in mere words and external actions, considered as unconnected with the heart, and aside from the motives and affections of which they are the fruit and expression; for all obedience and virtue consist in the disposition and exercises

of the heart, and in the expressions and exertions of it, in words and external actions; and when the latter are not the fruit and genuine expressions of the former, whatever they may be, there is no holiness or moral good in them; and when they are the fruit and production of a wrong and sinful disposition, motives, and exercises of heart, they are bad fruit, and, considered in this connection, are sinful. This is expressly asserted by Christ: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." (Matt. xii. 33–35.) The external appearances and expressions, in words and conduct, of both of them, in some, yea, many instances, may be the same, or so much alike, in the view of man, as not to be distinguished. But those of the one are good, as they proceed from a good heart, and are the proper expression of his true benevolence and goodness; those of the other are evil, as they proceed from an evil heart, and are the fruit and effect of selfish motives, or of self-love, and all the appearance they have of the contrary is nothing but falsehood and hypocrisy.

Mankind in their state of depravity and blindness are liable to make great mistakes, not only with respect to real holiness of heart, in what it consists, but as to the way and manner in which an honest and good heart is to be expressed in words and actions; and, therefore, stand in need of particular instruction and direction with regard to this. God has been pleased to furnish man with direction in the revelation which he has given, and has abundantly taught us how, and in what manner, we are to express that love in which all holiness consists, and what are the natural effects of it in words and actions, on different occasions, and towards different objects. This is done more summarily in the ten commandments spoken from Mount Sinai by God himself, in the audience of all the people of Israel, and afterwards written by him on two tables of stone. But this is more particularly taught and explained by numerous precepts respecting our conduct on various occasions, and towards different objects and persons; and by the history and example of good men, and especially by the precepts and example of Christ.

By these, the conduct, which is a proper expression of love to God and to our neighbor, including ourselves, is so particularly delineated, that they who are under the influence of this love are not exposed to make any great mistakes, but will be directed and excited to all Christian practice in each branch of it.

I. Christian practice, as it more immediately respects God and the things of the invisible world, which is the practice of piety, consists chiefly in the following things: —

1. A public profession of a belief of the great, important truths and doctrines contained in divine revelation, and sincere approbation of them; a profession of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and that we do dedicate and devote ourselves to his service, submitting to him as our Lord and Savior, promising to obey all his commands, and attend upon all his ordinances; at the same time, professing love to the visible disciples of Christ, and a desire to join to a society of such who are mutually engaged to promote the cause and kingdom of Christ in the world, and maintain his worship and ordinances, in a way which is agreeable to our judgment and conscience. Such a public profession is due to God, and no man can properly honor Christ without it, and is, therefore, the natural expression of love to God, and the spirit of true piety. This, therefore, has been required and practised in all ages, under the Old Testament and the New, as the only way in which a visible church has existed in the world, or can exist. This is expressed in Scripture in the following words: "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day." (Deut. xxix. 10, 12.) "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isa. xliv. 3–5.) "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And the Lord *added to the church daily* such as should be saved. And believers were the more *added to the Lord*, multitudes both of men and women. And much people was added unto the Lord. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." (Acts ii. 41, 47; v. 14; viii. 37; xi. 24.) "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 16.) Baptism necessarily implies such a profession, and an express engagement to obey and serve Jesus Christ.

2. If a person has not been baptized in his infancy, a submission to this commanded rite is required of him, as a Christian, without which no profession of faith and obedience to Christ is to be considered as credible, or can constitute him a visible Christian. If he has been baptized in his infancy, and

so made a visible member of the church, in the sense explained above, his approbation of this, and of all that is implied in it, must be expressly or implicitly declared in the public profession which he makes; and when such a professor who is baptized, and a visible member of a church, has children, he is required to offer and dedicate them to Christ in baptism, and promise to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This, and his faithful performance of his engagements in this transaction, is an important part of the practice of piety and the duty which he owes to Christ, which, at the same time, is a duty which he owes to his children and to the church.

3. A serious, devout, and constant attendance on all the religious institutions of Jesus Christ is an important part of Christian practice. These are, public worship; consisting in prayer, singing praise to God, and hearing the word preached; attending on the Lord's supper, whenever it is administered in the church to which he belongs; a careful and strict observation of the Christian Sabbath, in abstaining from all secular business, labor, or recreation, except that which is of real necessity, and works of charity and mercy, and devoting the whole day to religious exercises, in public and more privately. This is an important part of the practice of Christian piety; and every branch of the Christian's exercise of piety will commonly keep pace with his observation of the Sabbath. If a Christian feels in any good measure as he ought to do, this will be a high day with him, as in a peculiar manner consecrated to the honor and service of Christ. He is ready to welcome it on every return of it, with peculiar satisfaction and joy, and be concerned to order his worldly circumstances and business, so as to have the least possible interruption in the duties of the Sabbath. Thus he will turn away his foot from the Sabbath, from doing his worldly pleasure on God's holy day, and will call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honorable, and will conscientiously honor him, not doing his own ways, nor finding his own pleasure, nor speaking his own words. (Isa. lviii. 13.)

4. A free and cheerful contribution for the support of the gospel and public religion, according to his ability and opportunity, is a necessary part of the practice of a Christian. This cannot be maintained and supported according to the institution of Christ, without cost and expense; and the Lord Jesus Christ has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (1 Cor. ix. 14.) Love to God and divine institutions, and a regard for the honor of Christ, will open the heart of a Christian, and he will be ready to contribute

liberally for the support of the gospel, and will much rather retrench his expenses in other things than fall short of his duty in this, which he will consider as a privilege rather than a burden; and it is the duty of every Christian to make all those exertions, and be at all the expense which may be necessary, to spread and propagate the gospel to those who have not enjoyed it, according to his opportunity, capacity, and ability to promote such an important design.

5. A serious, pious manner of conversation, which is the proper effect and expression of a belief of the great truths of Christianity, and a sense of their importance and excellence; being ready to speak and hear of the things of religion on all proper occasions; speaking of God, his works, and ways, and institutions, and the things of the invisible, eternal world, as being realities, and with becoming reverence and solemnity, and carefully avoiding all vain, trifling conversation. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Eph. iv. 29.)

6. The Christian ought to give great and constant attention to his Bible, reading and studying it daily, that he may know what is the will of God there revealed, and understand the important truths it contains, and that they may be more and more impressed on his mind, and be plain and familiar to him. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Ps. i. 2.) And he will be disposed to improve all the advantages and helps which are in his reach to understand the Scriptures, and make advances in divine knowledge, both by reading the writings of those who have explained the Scriptures and inculcated the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and by conversation with those from whom he may hope to get instruction. In this, and in his devotions, he spends all the time which can be spared from his particular worldly business and calling, and for which the Sabbath gives him special advantages.

7. The pious education of children, and of all who are under his care, is a duty comprehended in the practice of piety. This consists in family government, and giving them religious instruction at all proper opportunities, and in advising, exhorting, and admonishing them respecting their religious exercises and conduct. This was strictly enjoined on the children of Israel, as has been particularly observed in a former chapter, and is implied in St. Paul's direction to Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

8. Prayer, or devotion, is a great and important branch of

Christian exercise and practice, and is the constant employ of a pious heart, and essential to true Christianity. This comprehends adoration, confession, petition, thanksgiving, and praise; of all which, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the immediate object. Adoration consists in thinking and speaking of the divine perfections, character, and works, in devout addresses to Him. And as this is to be done with veneration, and a sense and acknowledgment of the divine worthiness, excellence, and glory, consisting and appearing in these, which is praise; therefore, adoration and praise are not to be distinguished so as to be considered distinct and separate from each other. Confession consists in an acknowledgment made to God of our sins, unworthiness, guilt, and misery, and of our absolute dependence on God for every good; and profession may be considered as implied in this, of repentance, and dependence on God for pardon and all the good we want, in a belief and approbation of the truths contained in divine revelation. Petition is making request to God, and asking for the good things which we want and desire for ourselves or others, or for any good which appears to us desirable, and not contrary to the revealed will of God to grant or do; which petitions are always to be made with an unreserved, absolute resignation to the will of God. Thanksgiving consists in expressing our gratitude to God for all the expressions and exercises of his benevolence which come within our view; for benevolence or goodness expressed is the only object or ground of true gratitude, wherever it appears, and whoever be the subjects of it, and however it may be abused and perverted by individuals, and turned into the greatest evil to them.

Prayer, taken in this large sense, as comprehending all this, even the whole that is implied in addressing God and holding intercourse with him, in secret, private or public, is much spoken of in Scripture, and recommended by many precepts and examples of pious men, and of Jesus Christ himself. He spake a parable, to show that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, and to encourage them to do it. (Luke xviii. 1, etc.) And we are commanded, in *every thing*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known to God. "To pray without ceasing; to pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." And the greatest motives and encouragement to prayer that are possible are exhibited in divine revelation, both by precept, example, and promises; of which every one must be sensible, who is well acquainted with the Bible. It is, therefore, thought needless to go into particulars to prove or illustrate this.

The Christian is always near the throne of grace. God represents his ear as always open to the cry of them who look to him and trust in him. The Mediator has opened the way of access to God for sinners, and bid them ask all good things in his name, and promises that they shall be heard, and have their petitions granted; therefore, we may have free access to God, on all occasions and at all times, and we may pray always, with all prayer; and this is both the duty and interest of a Christian. Wherever he is, whatever be his circumstances and business, his heart may rise to God in any part of devotion, petition, thanksgiving, praise, etc., in desultory ejaculations, and he pour out his heart before God in groanings which cannot be uttered in words. With this sort of prayer every Christian is acquainted, and the higher he rises in the exercise of Christianity the more he practises it.

Set times of secret prayer, also, come into the practice of a Christian, when he retires from the world, and out of the sight of men, and summons his heart to attention to the worship of God in secret. Of this particular kind of prayer, Christ speaks in the following words: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 6.) It is plain that Christ speaks here of personal prayer, in distinction from that which is social. No Christian can live comfortably or as he ought, without the daily practice of this sort of prayer. It is suited to keep religion alive in his heart. He has many wants and particular concerns between God and his soul, which cannot be expressed in social worship, which it is highly proper and greatly beneficial for him to express before God in secret, where he may do it with unrestrained freedom.

Social prayer is also a duty, in which Christians join with each other in worshipping God in a greater or less number, more publicly or less, according to their particular connections and special occasions. It is highly proper, and greatly beneficial, that each family should practise social worship together and as a family daily, and in a constant, uninterrupted course. They have many family wants, mercies, and afflictions, which are changing and may be renewed from day to day, and which call for particular acknowledgment, confessions, and petitions, which cannot be so properly made in any other way, but by the family uniting together, morning and evening, in social worship. And this, when properly practised, tends to keep up a view and sense of the things of religion in the members of the family, and to solemnize and quicken all of them; and it cannot be conceived how parents and heads of families can

properly educate their children, and those of whom they have the care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and treat them in the best manner that tends to form them to piety and religion, if they do not pray daily with them and for them, in this social way, joining the serious reading of the Scriptures with their devotions.*

A number of instances of our Savior's praying with his disciples, which were his family, are mentioned, and there is no reason to think these were the only instances; but they are so related, that it is reasonable to conclude that this was his constant practice. (Luke ix. 18, 28; xi. 1.) The apostle Paul, when he presents salutation to Christians, frequently mentions and salutes the churches in their houses, by which he means the members of Christian families. They are *little churches*, when they unite in daily worship and reading the holy Scriptures, and proper instruction, order, and discipline are maintained; and are little nurseries, from whence more large and extensive churches are supplied and supported. But the families in which there is no religious worship practised make a contrary appearance, and have a contrary tendency, even to demolish the church and root out religion, and are too commonly the places of irreligion and vice.

It is also agreeable to the nature and dictates of the Christian religion, that persons of different ages and sexes should unite and form themselves into different societies, and meet together at times and places upon which they shall agree, as most convenient for prayer and religious conversation, or reading the Word of God, or books suited to instruct and excite them to their duty. This tends to promote religion, to keep up a sense of it on the mind, and to unite the hearts of Christians one to another, and direct and quicken them in

* Devout singing in families seems to be a proper part of family worship. It has been, and now is, practised by many devout families. Christians are directed to sing psalms and hymns, and they doubtless did it in their families, as well as more publicly. They taught and admonished one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord. (Col. iii. 16.) Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, when only they two worshipped together in prison. Where this is wholly neglected in families, their worship appears to be defective; and, doubtless, when religion shall appear in the true spirit and lustre of it in families, singing in a sweet, harmonious manner will be one part of their daily worship. It is owing to a defect in the education of children that they are not all taught to sing when young. If proper attention were paid to this, there would be but few, if any, unable to sing so as to add to the music and harmony; and children would be trained up in families so as to be able to join with others in this part of public worship, and render it more universal, beautiful, and melodious, and more becoming a Christian, worshipping assembly. In the millennium, children will sing hosannas to the Son of David, not only in public but in families, when all will join with one heart and one mouth to sing praises unto God.

relative duties. Thus young men may form themselves into a society to meet frequently for those purposes, and young women by themselves; and elderly men by themselves, and women apart by themselves. Or societies of males in general, older and younger, may meet by themselves, and females of every age apart in a distinct society; or both males and females may meet together in different neighborhoods, when it can be done under proper regulations and may be found most convenient. It is easy to see that such societies, under good regulations, tend to promote religion, union, and good order among Christians; and it has been found by experience, that revivals of religion have actually produced this effect, and led people to form into praying societies of this kind, which, when properly conducted, have proved salutary and profitable.

The prayers and devotions of public worship are to be constantly attended with a serious and decent behavior, so as not to disturb, but promote and assist, others in this part of public, solemn devotion. The constant practice of secret, family, and other social prayer, which has now been mentioned, is suited to prepare for this more public and solemn worship. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools." (Ec. v. 1.) "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." (Isa. lvi. 7.) "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." (Acts iii. 1.) "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily *to pray before the Lord*, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and *to pray before the Lord*." (Zech. viii. 21, 22.)

9. Fasting is to be joined with prayer, at certain times, and on special occasions. Religious fasting consists in abstinence from common food and drink for a certain time, longer or shorter, as shall be found most convenient and best suited to answer the ends of fasting, which are to promote and express engagedness of mind in prayer and devotion; especially to express humiliation, contrition, and concern of mind, and a readiness to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, and mortify the body. This is to be practised, especially when under any particular and great calamity, spiritual or temporal; or when such calamity is threatened, and persons set themselves to seek of God deliverance from the evil that is upon them, or that the threatened evil may be averted. Also, when any great and special mercy is to be sought, it is proper

to do it with fasting and prayer. This is a commanded duty, and there are many instances of it, as practised by pious persons, both in the Old and in the New Testament. There are many instances of personal fasting recorded in Scripture, which is to be performed by single persons, and is to be done as secretly as circumstances will permit. Of this personal fasting Christ speaks, when he says, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 17, 18.) Social fasting and prayer is also a duty, in the practice of which particular families have sometimes a call to join; and more public societies or whole churches, as the duty may be pointed out in divine providence. Our Savior supposes it will frequently be the duty for Christians to fast, and implicitly, at least, enjoins it, when he says of them, "The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." (Matt. ix. 15.)

Before this account of the devotion which is essential to the practice of Christians is dismissed, it will be proper to consider the following question: —

Question. It is granted, that the Scripture reveals an omniscient and unchangeable God; and at the same time directs and commands men to pray. But how these are consistent, is not so readily seen. What encouragement or reason can there be to pray to an omniscient and unchangeable God?

Ans. 1. If there were no omniscient, unchangeable God, there could be no just ground or reason for prayer. On this supposition, there would be no God; for none but an omniscient and unchangeable being can be God. But if this were possible, and God were changeable, there would be no reason to trust in him for any thing, because what he would be disposed to do, and whether he would grant any petition made to him, or fulfil any of his promises, would be utterly uncertain; and, therefore, there would be no ground and encouragement for prayer. But if there could be any encouragement to pray to a changeable being, and we knew he was able to grant, and would give whatever we asked of him, and do as we desired, it would be the greatest presumption to ask him for any thing, unless we knew it was for our own good and for the general good to have it granted, and so might set ourselves up as judges, directors, and governors of the universe. Therefore, the truly humble, pious person would not dare to pray for any thing if God were not omniscient and unchangeable. Hence it follows, that if there be any reason and encouragement to pray at all, it must be because God is om-

niscient and unchangeable. The truly pious do not set up their own will, or desire any petition which they make should be granted, unless it be consistent with the infinitely wise, good, and unchangeable will of God. To this they refer all, and in this they trust, with the most pleasing confidence, and say implicitly or expressly, in all their petitions, "If it be consistent with thy unchangeable, wise, and holy will; not our will, but thine be done, whatever it may be." Any petition which is put up with a disposition contrary to this, is an act of impiety and enmity against God.

Ans. 2. There is good reason, and all desirable or possible encouragement, to pray to an omniscient, unchangeable God. For, —

1. It is reasonable and proper that the pious should express their wants and desires to God and their dependence on him, and trust in him for the supply of their wants. If they have such wants and such desires, and feel their dependence on God for a supply, and trust in him alone, and such feeling and desires be right and proper, it must be reasonable and proper that they should be expressed. And, indeed, the very existence and exercise of such feelings and desires are a kind and degree of expression of them before God, and, therefore, the expression of them is essential to their existence; and the more clear, strong, and particular the expression of them is, the more properly and the better do they exist. But these are expressed in the most natural and best manner in prayer. It appears, from what has been now observed, that such feelings and desires are themselves a sort of mental prayer; and it is, therefore, too late not to pray when they exist; and the more particularly and distinctly, and with the greater strength they are acted out and expressed in thoughts and words, in particular and solemn addresses to God, the more reasonable and proper are these exercises of the mind. Besides, this is the only way in which pious Christians in this world can not only express their piety in the most proper manner, but also pay proper acknowledgments to God, and give him the honor due to his name.

2. Asking God for the favors they want is suited to prepare them to receive them, and fit them for the mercy he designs to bestow upon them, so as to render it the greater and better to them. Though God be unchangeable, the Christian stands in need of being changed; the change is, therefore, to take place in him; and nothing can be more suited to prepare the Christian to receive good things, than a proper asking for them, and the views and exercises implied in this. The expressing our wants and our desires to God, in a particular and solemn

application to him, and our dependence on him for help, and trust in him, and our conviction and sense of his sufficiency for us, tends greatly to strengthen these views, feelings, and exercises of the heart, and to excite and maintain the constant exercise of them; and to form the mind more and more to a preparedness to receive them as a free gift from God, and to render the blessings which are asked more sweet, and of greater worth to the soul. In this view, the reasonableness of prayer, and the great encouragement to practise it, are evident.

3. From the foregoing, it appears that prayer is a real, proper, and necessary means of obtaining and receiving blessings from God, and as much so as if he were not omniscient and unchangeable. Though God has determined to bestow blessings on men, this does not exclude the means by which they are to be received, but necessarily supposes and includes them, and prayer is one of them; therefore, when God had declared, by the prophet Ezekiel, what blessings he determined to bestow on his church and people, he nevertheless said, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." (Ezek. xxvi. 37.)

4. Hence it appears, that God hears the prayers of his people, and regards them as much and as really answers them, and they receive blessings as really and as much by this means and in answer to them, as if he were not unchangeable; therefore, there is as much reason and as great encouragement to pray, as if he were changeable: yea, and much more; for it has been shown, that if he were not unchangeable, there could be no safety in trusting in him, or encouragement to pray to him.

5. The satisfaction and pleasure that is to be enjoyed by the Christian in prayer and devotion, is a sufficient reason for it, and encouragement to practise it, if there were no other. This is not performed by the pious Christian as a task and burdensome duty, but as a privilege and high enjoyment. The benevolent friends of God have great support, enjoyment, and happiness in casting all their care upon him, and expressing the desires of their heart to him; and "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known their requests to him." They would pray, were it only for the enjoyment which they have in the exercise, and say in their hearts, "I will call upon God as long as I live;" while others restrain prayer before God, and say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" They are pleased with the way which is opened for sinners' access to God by an infinitely worthy Mediator, and

admire the divine condescension and grace in this; and though they be certain that God is unchangeable, this does not tend to prevent, or in the least abate, the pleasure and enjoyment they have in making known their requests to God, or their desire constantly to practise it; but this truth gives them support and consolation, and increases their delight in calling upon God; and were not God unchangeable, they would see no reason nor feel any encouragement to pray unto him, or even *dare* to ask any thing of him, as has been observed.

II. Christian practice consists, in part, in a proper conduct towards our fellow-men, or in that conduct of which our neighbor is the more immediate object, and is employed in relative and social duties; and this consists wholly in obeying the law of love, in loving our neighbor as ourselves, and in expressing and acting out this love in the most natural and proper manner, in words and actions, on all occasions, and at all times. All this is comprised in the two following particulars: —

1. In doing justice to all with whom we have any concern and connection; in giving to every one what is his due, what he has a right to from us; which is opposed to every instance and the least degree of dishonesty and injustice, whereby any person is injured by words or actions, in any of his interests, in his name, estate, or person. The least violation of the rights of any person, by taking or withholding from him any thing which is his due, and to which he has a right, is contrary to that comprehensive precept of Christ, of which every rational man cannot but approve in his conscience. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke vi. 31.)

2. Benevolence is expressed and acted out further, in doing good to all men, and promoting their true interest and happiness, as far as we have opportunity, or according to our capacity, and the advantages we have to do it. This is necessarily included in loving our neighbor as ourselves, and in doing to others as we would they should do unto us, and is expressly commanded in the following words: "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." (Gal. vi. 10.)

These two generals comprehend a great number of particulars, some of which must be mentioned.

1. Speaking the truth in all cases, and at all times, in opposition to every instance and degree of falsehood, and deceiving our neighbor. This includes a punctual fulfilment of all covenants and promises we make with men, and the careful and exact payment of all just debts; honesty and uprightness in all our dealings with our neighbor; taking no advantage of his weakness, ignorance, or necessity, and dependence on us.

And we are not only to be concerned to conduct honestly, but to take special care and pains to appear in the view of others to do so, and guard to our utmost against all contrary appearance. Our love to Christ, to our neighbor, and ourselves, will lead to this; and it is commanded by the apostle Paul. He directs Christians to "provide things honest *in the sight of all men.*" (Rom. xii. 17.) And this he says he took care to do himself, "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also *in the sight of men.*" (2 Cor. viii. 21.)

2. Taking great care and pains, and doing their utmost to live in peace with all men, and to preserve or make peace between others with whom they have any influence and connection as far as this is possible, consistent with truth and duty. Christians live in peace with all men as far as is possible, and are peace-makers so far as is in their power, and are disposed, when it is consistent with truth and duty, to give up their own right and interest for the sake of peace. They are concerned, and study and endeavor to "give no offence, neither to Jews nor Gentiles, nor to the church of God; but to please all men in all things, not seeking their own profit, but the profit of many." (1 Cor. x. 32, 33.)

3. Giving all the assistance and relief in their power to others who are suffering under temporal bodily wants and distresses; being disposed to do good, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and minister to the help and comfort of others, as far as they have ability and opportunity. (1 Tim. vi. 18.) "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.)

4. As Christian benevolence seeks the greatest good and happiness of all, so far as is consistent with the greatest general good, and considers man as capable of infinitely better and greater good than any carnal or worldly comfort and happiness, and views him as infinitely miserable unless he be renewed and saved by Jesus Christ; the Christian is disposed to do all in his power to prevent the eternal destruction of men, and promote their salvation by their becoming real Christians. In this view he attempts, according to his ability, opportunity, and station in life, and connection with others, to instruct the ignorant, convince and reclaim the erroneous, reform the vicious, and awaken the attention of all to the great truths and important duties of Christianity, "if by any means he may save some;" and he exercises a constant care and watchfulness with respect to all his words and conduct before others, not to say or do any thing which would tend to

prejudice them against true religion, or be any way injurious to their souls; but on the contrary, to speak and act so, on all occasions, as shall tend to remove prejudices against the truths and ways of Christ, and lead them cordially to embrace the gospel; and to cause his light so to shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven. (Matt. v. 16.) In this there is the exercise both of piety and humanity.

5. As Christianity forms the true Christian to a tender concern both for the temporal and eternal interest of all, and aims to conduct so as not to hurt it in any respect, but to promote it, so he is particularly tender of the character of others, and careful not to injure it by backbiting, speaking evil of them, and slandering them. And this requires the more care and resolution, as the contrary is so common among men, and even many professing Christians, and as the tongue cannot be properly bridled with respect to this, without constant care and watchfulness. Christianity forbids all slander, backbiting, and speaking evil of others, as this is directly contrary to that charity or benevolence which is essential to a true Christian; therefore, he carefully avoids the practice of slander, and speaking evil of others, in the following instances: —

First. He does not make or spread an evil report of others which is not true, or which magnifies the faults of which they may be guilty, and represents them worse than they really are. This he avoids, as contrary to truth, and the highest kind of slander. He will not only not make a false report and spread it, but will not *take up* an evil report concerning others, and spread it, merely because he has heard it asserted by others, while he has no certain evidence of the truth of it; for this is contrary to the law of love, and real slander, however commonly it may be practised by men.

Secondly. He will not speak of the evil conduct of any person of which he knows him to be guilty, or divulge that to any one whomsoever which is known to no one but himself and the person who is guilty, and which, therefore, he cannot prove to be true; for this is contrary to loving our neighbor as ourselves, and is real slander. If we ourselves should be guilty of any action which is very wrong and odious, we should not be disposed to speak of it to others, or if we should do it, it would be wrong, and an addition to our crime; and though it should be done in the view of some one person, he would have no right to discover it to any one else, but is obliged to keep it an inviolable secret in his own breast, as he cannot speak of it to any other person, consistent with loving his neighbor as himself. And if he do speak of it, and spread this

evil report of his neighbor, of the truth of which he is not able to give any evidence but his own assertion, which is no proof, he is guilty of slandering his neighbor, and it is proper that he should suffer as a slanderer. At least, he ought to be considered as a slanderer, and is justly exposed to suffer as such.*

THIRDLY. The Christian is bound by his religion not to spread an evil report concerning his brother or neighbor, or make it more public than it already is, though there be good evidence that it is true. If he hear an ill report of his neighbor, or is a witness of some crime of which his brother is guilty, among other witnesses, he will be sorry to see or hear such evil things, but will not go and spread them farther, by telling others of them. This would not be consistent with his loving his neighbor as himself. For if a Christian be guilty of a fault, the more public it is and the farther it is known, the more disagreeable it is to him; and it is contrary to his duty as well as to his inclination to publish his own faults, which otherwise might be kept more private; and he who is disposed to publish his neighbor's faults, and makes them more known than otherwise they would be, is guilty of evil speaking and real slander. But it must be here observed, that there is an exception from this rule, when it is necessary for the public safety and good, or the security of individuals, to have the more private evil deeds or general bad character of our neighbor made public; or when persons are called to give evidence against men, and be witnesses of their crimes before civil authority, in order to their being brought to proper

* If it should be asked whether the person who is really guilty of the evil deed, though there can be no legal proof of it, ought not to confess it, seeing he knows it to be true, and how can he deny it, consistent with truth; the answer is, the guilty person has no more call or right to confess and publish his fault than if the other had not reported it, and, therefore, he cannot do it, consistent with his duty. The other person has declared what he cannot prove; and, therefore, has done it in his own wrong, and it really remains as much of a secret as if he had not asserted it. Nor is his silence and refusing to say whether he be guilty or not in any degree denying the fact, or intimating that the report is not true, or that it is true, and he is guilty. The person who is in this manner accused by a single evidence who reports it without any circumstance sufficient to confirm what he asserts, ought not to have the question put to him, whether the report be true, and he be really guilty; because he has no right to answer in the affirmative, if he be really guilty, agreeable to the report; and he cannot answer in the negative, consistent with the truth. But if any one imprudently, and without any right, do question him, he has a right to refuse to give any answer, in the affirmative or the contrary. His proper answer will be to this effect, "Since my neighbor, or brother, has reported that I have been guilty of such a crime, let him prove it. If he cannot, he ought not to be believed, but must be considered as a slanderer, and is liable to suffer as such; and he who believes the report, and is disposed to treat me as if I were guilty, and takes up this report and spreads it yet farther, injures me, and is guilty of slander."

punishment, for the benefit of society and the suppression of such evil deeds. Or when this is necessary to bring an offending brother before the church, that he may be brought to repentance, or rejected and cast out; and in that case, the most private steps are first to be taken, in order to bring him to repentance more privately, as has been observed in the section on church discipline.

Fourthly. While a Christian is disposed not to publish the faults of others, to make them known or speak freely of them, but to hide and cover them, as far as consistently with the public good, and the safety of his neighbor and his duty, he will be ready to say every thing which he can with truth, and consistently with his duty, in the favor of those in whom he sees some, and perhaps many, faults. He will be more ready to speak of the good part of their character than of the bad, and of those things which are commendable in them; and will appear in their cause, and vindicate them, when they appear to be too severely censured and unjustly condemned.

6. Christian practice includes the faithful and punctual performance of all relative duties, founded in the different relations and stations in which persons stand in this life. These are various, and call for different and various duties, but may be all comprehended in the different relations included in superiors, inferiors, and equals. Love will form the Christian to the duties required in those different relations, and they all consist in expressing this love in all proper ways in those different relations.

The first relations which are the foundation of all others are those which commonly take place in a family, which require different duties. The heads of a family are generally the parents, husband, and wife. It is the duty of the sexes in general to enter into the marriage relation with each other, unless their circumstances be so ordered, in divine providence, as to be inconsistent with this. The standing command to mankind is, to multiply and fill the earth, in this way, with inhabitants. And the command is, "Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." And there is no marriage but this of *one* husband with *one* wife, consistent with the divine institution, or the good of mankind. This is a peculiar and near relation, suited to the comfort and happiness of human life; and real Christianity exalts the enjoyment and happiness of this relation unspeakably, when it takes place in a proper degree in each party. The union consists in love. The husband is the superior, and the wife is the inferior. They are by love to serve each other, by mutually promoting each other's comfort and use-

fulness and everlasting happiness. The inferiority and submission of the wife, when expressed properly in the acts of love, will be in no respect disagreeable, but pleasing, and greatly contribute to the happiness of the relation. The superiority of the husband, expressed in the most tender love, in supporting, protecting, honoring, and nourishing his wife, is suited to render the relation as complete and happy as any can be in this life.

Their natural affections to their children will give them pleasure in ministering to them and providing for them; but Christian benevolence will operate strongly to prompt them to give them a religious education, to govern, instruct, exhort, and persuade them to the exercise and practice of piety, training them up for Christ.

The children, as soon as they become pious, and are capable of expressing a Christian spirit, will be all obedience and submission to their parents, and will delight to please, comfort, and honor them in all proper ways. As brethren and sisters they will be united in the most sweet bonds of Christian love, added to their natural affection to each other, living in the most happy peace and harmony, and striving to serve and please each other in constant acts of kindness; and if there be any other domestics, they will quietly and with fidelity, prudence, and cheerfulness, do the duty of their place, so as to be most useful and comfortable to every member of the family, taking care that nothing be wasted and lost, but that the best interest of the family is secured and promoted. Thus regulated and happy is every family, where the true spirit and practice of Christianity take place in a proper manner and degree.

Different families, and the individual members of them, are connected with others by natural relation, near neighborhood, etc., from whence arise a number of duties which are to be practised towards them, according to their character, circumstances, and stations in life, whether superiors, equals, or inferiors, whether virtuous or vicious, friends or enemies. Christianity requires such a conduct towards all as shall express uprightness, humility, meekness, and good will to all however different their relation to us, or their character may be. A forgiving spirit, and love of benevolence to enemies, are peculiar to a Christian, and essential to his character. However they may hate him, and injure and abuse him, he will not be disposed to revenge himself, or do or wish them the least hurt; but will freely forgive them, and wish they may enjoy the highest good, and be as ready to do them good, and pray for them, as if they did not hate him and had not injured him.

In the practice of this, Christian benevolence appears in the true, distinguishing nature, beauty, and excellence of it; and is, therefore, particularly and repeatedly enjoined by Christ on his disciples. He says, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." (Matt. v. 44; vi. 15.)

Christianity lays the best and only foundation for true friendship; by the influence, and in the exercise of this, friends may be formed, and the most endearing and happy friendship take place, and be cultivated. There is a peculiar friendship between Christians. They love one another with a peculiar love of benevolence and complacency; and, therefore, are disposed, as they are commanded, to acts of beneficence and kindness to such especially, and in the first place. (Gal. vi. 10.) But they who are most acquainted with each other will exercise and enjoy this friendship to a much higher degree. They take a particular pleasure in conversing with each other, in which they are under no restraint, opening to one another their sentiments and their hearts with great freedom. They put great confidence in each other, and are faithful in keeping the secrets which are between them, and in doing good to each other, and praying for one another, and expressing their love and friendship in all proper ways, while it is in a great measure concealed from the men of the world.

The Christian, considered as a citizen, and a member of civil society, connected and supported by civil government, is a peaceable and useful member, sincerely seeking the public good, and ready to promote it in all proper ways, acting with fidelity and discretion, according to his ability, circumstances, and station, whether he be a ruler or subject. As a subject, he submits to civil authority, and obeys, and does what he can to support the laws of civil society, carefully performing every social duty, desiring "to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." And as a good and faithful member of the community, he will be ready to join with them in all necessary and proper ways to defend themselves from the unreasonable and violent assaults which others may make upon them to destroy them.

Every Christian is, or ought to be, a member of some particular church or society of Christians, united in solemn covenant to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, support and promote his cause and kingdom, maintain his worship and ordinances, and watch over and assist each other in Christian love and mutual forbearance, tenderness, and faithfulness. The nature and

design of such a church have been considered above. This is a society distinct from civil or worldly communities, and independent of them, and there are relative duties peculiar to the members of such churches. They are to pay a particular respect to the elders of the churches, to esteem them very highly for the sake of their work, and give them double honor, not only by attending upon their ministry, and submitting to them, when they declare the truths and duties which Christ has revealed and commanded, but also by giving them a sufficient and decent support. They have much duty to do to one another in faithfully attending to that discipline which Christ has instituted, and practising it with prudence, impartiality, and resolution. They are also to provide liberally for the poor of the church, and freely to contribute for the supply of their bodily wants, so that none shall suffer for the want of the necessaries of life; and it is not only the duty of individuals to give relief to particular persons, when they see them to stand in need of their help, but they ought to contribute a sufficient sum, to be lodged in the hands of the deacons, to enable them to give full relief to all the needy of the church; whose duty it is to acquaint themselves with those who may want, and with prudence and faithfulness to distribute, so as in the best and most private manner to relieve and comfort them. If the institution and command of Christ with respect to this were in any good measure observed, every member of his churches would be so supplied with the necessaries for the body, that they would have no occasion to apply to the men of the world, or to any worldly society, for help and relief.

These duties of Christians, as members of churches, are expressions of piety, and have been mentioned as such; but they are also relative duties of humanity and mercy; while every one attends to the duties of his place and station, according to the grace which is given unto him, so as to promote the peace and comfort of every individual and the edification of the whole body.

III. There are duties included in Christian practice, in which a man has a more immediate respect to himself, his own person, while they have a more remote respect to God and his neighbor.

Universal, disinterested benevolence, which is opposed to selfishness, desires and seeks the highest happiness of all, and, therefore, of the benevolent person himself, so far as is consistent with the good of others and the greatest general good; and as his individual person is more immediately under his care, and as he is under greater advantage to take care of his

own personal interests than others commonly are, and as there are certain exercises and duties which respect himself more immediately, which are necessary for his own personal comfort and greatest happiness, as well as for the greatest good of others, these are essential to the Christian character, and necessarily implied in loving our neighbor *as ourselves*. These duties may be ranked under the following heads: —

1. Temperance and frugality in eating and drinking. The body requires constant nourishment by food and drink; and what of this is necessary for health, and to preserve a person in a state most fit to answer the proper ends of life, is commonly taken with pleasure; but all excess and intemperance in eating or drinking is hurtful to the intemperate person, and injurious to others with whom he is connected. The Christian, therefore, is bound by the law of love to be temperate in all things, and to eat and drink for strength and health, and so that he may be best fitted for the duties of his station, and promote his own greatest enjoyment and happiness, and that of others. In this he is obliged to consult his own constitution, experience, and circumstances, that he may find what degree and kind of food and drink are best suited for his health and usefulness; and not to gratify and indulge his appetites any further than is necessary to answer these ends, but to keep his body under, and bring it into subjection to these rules. And in this way alone he can eat and drink, not unto himself, but to the glory of God.

2. Frugality, decency, and prudence in apparel. The Christian is to put on nothing superfluous, or to gratify pride or any lust; but only that which is necessary, and best suited to answer the ends of clothing, in which some regard is to be had to a person's station, business, and circumstances in life. The Christian, whatever apparel he is obliged to wear, or thinks proper to put on, ought to take care to be and appear neat and clean, as the contrary is indecent, and tends to injure the health of the body. The short, but comprehensive and important command of Christ, being strictly and judiciously observed, would regulate and fix the Christian's practice, both in eating and drinking, and in putting on apparel: "LET NOTHING BE LOST."

3. Chastity in thought, speech and behavior is an important Christian duty. This is strictly commanded, and much insisted upon in the Scripture. Christians are commanded to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." (Rom. xiii. 14. Gal. v. 19.) "But

fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints. This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." (Eph. v. 3. 1 Thess. vi. 3, 4.) The strictest chastity is most for the comfort and happiness and honor of those who practise it, and for the benefit of all with whom they are connected; and every thing contrary to this has the most pernicious and fatal tendency, and is injurious in a greater or less degree to those who indulge it, and those with whom they are concerned; therefore, strict chastity is obedience to the law of universal benevolence; and the contrary, and every thing which tends to it, is opposed to this. There is no virtue more recommended in Scripture than inviolable chastity and continence; and no vice more condemned, and the evil consequences more exposed, both in the historical and preceptive parts of Scripture, than incontinence and uncleanness. This is particularly done by Solomon in his address to young persons, in the first chapters of his Proverbs, which is proposed as a proper example for all parents in their instructing and warning their children. Youth are most exposed to violate the rules of strict chastity; therefore, have need of instruction, warning, and restraint on this head, and ought to keep at the greatest distance from the contrary vice, and carefully shun every temptation and snare by which they may be decoyed, as thousands have been, and never have recovered from the evil consequences. Therefore, the young Christian is under the greatest obligations to "flee youthful lusts."

4. A careful government and suppression of all those passions which distrub and ruffle the mind, and unfit persons for duty, and make them uncomfortable to themselves and to others. As Christians ought to govern their bodily inclinations and appetites, and not to gratify, but suppress and mortify, all those, so far as they tend to hurt themselves or others, so they are under obligation to regulate and govern their mental passions, and so to rule their own spirits, as to suppress and lay aside all the angry, unruly passions, which are the production of selfishness and pride, and render themselves unhappy, so far as they are indulged; and, on the contrary, they are commanded to maintain and constantly to exercise a calm, gentle, meek, peaceable, patient spirit, which is the natural attendant and genuine fruit of benevolence, and necessary in order to the Christian's proper possession and enjoyment of himself, and attendance on the duties of Christianity. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. He that hath no

rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls." (Pr. xvi. 32; xxv. 28.) Agreeably to this are the apostolic injunctions. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 31, 32.) "Let your moderation be known unto all men." (Phil. vi. 5.) "The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." (James iii. 17.) "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil." (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.)

5. A constant and careful cultivation and improvement of the mind, in seeking, pursuing, and acquiring useful knowledge and wisdom. Solomon says, "It is not good that the soul be without knowledge." This is the life and enjoyment of the mind, and is unspeakably the highest and most noble kind of enjoyment of which a rational creature is capable. All the knowledge which a person of an honest and good heart obtains is useful to him, and puts him under advantage to be more useful to others. This is not to be obtained, and a constant progress made in it, without labor, by diligent attention and inquiry, in the improvement of all those helps and advantages with which we are furnished. The objects of knowledge are various and infinite; and the knowledge of any of them is not useless to a mind well disposed, and every branch and degree of knowledge is suited to improve such a mind; it really adds to its existence, and increases true wisdom in a wise and benevolent heart. Some objects are more important, grand, and excellent than others, and men have more concern and connection with some than with others; and, therefore, the knowledge of them is proportionably more excellent, important, and useful; and that knowledge which is of the moral kind, and implies a good taste and right exercises of heart, and is, therefore, the knowledge of the great objects and truths which respect the moral world and belong to that, is the most important and excellent kind of knowledge, and does most enlarge the soul, and gives the highest degree of enjoyment. This kind of knowledge is, therefore, to be sought in the first place, and with the greatest thirst and engagedness of mind.

And as God is infinitely the greatest part of existence, and includes the sum of all the natural and moral world, and the knowledge of his moral character includes the knowledge of his laws, moral government, and kingdom, and of all morality, and of every thing necessary to be known in the moral world,

the knowledge of God is, in Scripture, considered as comprehending the whole. "And this is life eternal, that they might *know thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 8.) "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Pr. ii. 3, 4, 5.) "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. ix. 24.) This is the knowledge which includes true understanding and wisdom, of which Solomon speaks so much in his writings. It is the duty and interest of every Christian to make advances in this knowledge, and in all kinds of knowledge and speculations for which he has opportunity, as subservient and advantageous to this. In this way he is to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

And this is one end which the Christian ought to have in view, among others, in his devotions and prayers, and in his daily reading and studying the "Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. ii. 15–17.) This is one end of his constant attendance on public instruction, and the preaching of the gospel, that by hearing the word he may *understand* it, and bring forth fruit. For this end, he is to meditate, read, and study, as he has opportunity, that he may improve and advance in useful knowledge; "trying all things, and holding fast that which is good." And this ought to be one end in his conversing with his neighbors and Christian friends. He ought not only to study to speak to their benefit and edification, but to converse in order to get instruction himself, and improve his own mind in knowledge and understanding; and will, therefore, "be swift to hear, and slow to speak." And, in this view, he will avoid, as much as may be, all trifling and vain company, as well as that which is worse; and he will be ready to obey the command given by Solomon, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." (Pr. xiv. 7.) And, on the contrary, he will seek the company of the serious and wise, from whom

he may hope to get instruction. "For he that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." (Pr. xiii. 20.)

6. The Christian is diligent and faithful in attending to, and prosecuting the business of, his particular calling, in which he is fixed by divine Providence, in opposition to sloth, idleness, and misspense of time. He attends to his own proper calling and business, and pursues that with industry, prudence, and diligence, and is not a busy body in other men's matters; not an idle tattler and brawler, going from house to house, and spending his time in idle chat, which is of no advantage to himself or to any one else, but the contrary; but abides in his own calling, steadily prosecuting his business, doing every thing in the proper time and season. He does not sit up late, when there is no particular and extraordinary call to it, which tends to injure his health, and unfit him for his proper business, or prevent his rising early to attend in the proper season on the duties of his calling. Thus he conscientiously and with care obeys the command, "Not to be slothful in his business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; abiding with diligence in the same calling wherein he is called." (Rom. xii. 11. 1 Cor. vii. 20.)

REFLECTIONS.

I. From the above brief sketch of Christian practice, and the character of a true Christian, it appears that Christianity is in the best manner suited to make those happy in this world and forever who cordially embrace and practise it, and to render society, whether public or more private, beautiful and happy.

So far as the true spirit and proper practice of Christianity take place, it delivers each subject of it from those passions and lusts which war against the soul, and contain evil and unhappiness, even in the indulgence of them; and it forms them to those views and exercises respecting the most grand and excellent objects, and that practice in which they enjoy peace of mind and conscience, and have the best and highest kind of enjoyment of which the human nature is capable, which never can cloy or cease, but is in the nature of it reasonable, pure, and permanent; and it forms the Christian to the highest and most excellent kind of social felicity. It constitutes the best, most perfect, and happy society that can be imagined, or that is possible. It spreads the most happy peace through the whole community, however large it may be, fixes every one in his proper place, and makes him useful to the

whole; and at the same time gives each individual the highest satisfaction and pleasure in being a member of such a society, composed of the most excellent friends to each other, and to him; and he, as a friend to every member of the society and to the whole, enjoys the good and happiness of the whole, to the extent of his capacity. Christianity forms society to the strongest, most permanent, and happy union, so far as the true spirit of it is imbibed and carried into practice. It binds them together by the strong, everlasting, and most perfect bond, charity, or Christian love.

And it must appear to all who properly use their reason, that piety, and the practice of it, is essential to the best good and greatest happiness of society and of individuals in this world. It is that love which unites men to God and the Redeemer, and forms them to all the acts of piety, and gives them the highest enjoyment, which at the same time unites them to each other, and forms them to all social duties and enjoyments. The latter cannot exist without the former. Where there is no piety, there may be a sort of union in society, and a degree of enjoyment, in imitation of Christian social virtues and duties; but it must be a low, mean thing, without any real benevolence, or proper, lasting foundation, and, therefore, not to be depended upon.

How greatly mistaken, then, are they, who do not consider the exercise and practice of piety as any part of social happiness, or in the least advantageous to it, and leave Christianity wholly out of their idea and scheme of public virtue and social happiness! It is impossible there should be any great degree of personal or public social happiness without Christian piety and morality, founded on Christian principles; and so far only as these take place, personal and public happiness is secured and promoted; and they must certainly have a low, debased, and corrupt taste for enjoyment and happiness, who think they can be more happy, both personally and in society, without real Christianity than with it, and are expecting and seeking it for themselves and the public, in opposition to Christian practice, and in disregard to the laws of Christ, and by an open violation of them. Their enjoyment, considered personally and by themselves, or in society, must be mean and low at best, and very unworthy of man, who is made capable of unspeakably higher and more noble happiness in his own mind, independent of others, or in society, in the exercise and practice of Christianity, and the social virtues and conduct which it prescribes.

It will be asked by some, whether all this be not confuted by fact and experience, since Christianity has not rendered

societies and kingdoms happy where it has been generally received and professed, and has been the means of the contrary, and produced contentions, cruel persecutions, and wars; and Christians have contended with Christians, and persecuted and destroyed each other.

Answer. That Christianity has had no better and no more happy effect where it has been in a sense received and professed, has not been owing to the nature and tendency of it, but to the abuse of it, and opposition to it, and a refusal cordially to receive it, and practise agreeably to the spirit and revealed laws of it. By this it has been perverted to very bad purposes, and made the occasion of great mischief and unhappiness among men. Any one may be certain of this, by attending to the Bible, and well observing what are the principles, rules, and practice there inculcated and prescribed; and what would be the certain effect, if they were cordially received and obeyed. We must consult the Bible if we would know what Christianity is; what are the truths there revealed, and what disposition, exercises, and practices it does recommend and enjoin. And in this way alone can we learn, and be able to judge of the nature and tendency of it, and see how far it has been abused and perverted by men. He who will attend to the Bible with impartiality, candor, and discerning, will be sure that whenever the truths and religion there revealed shall be properly received and reduced to practice by all the people, and Christianity shall have a genuine and complete effect, it will effectually banish all the evils which now take place in society among men, whether more private or public, by putting an end to all unrighteousness and oppression, unfaithfulness, and fraud, to all contention and war, pride, ambition, and selfishness, and to the indulgence of every lust, in word or conduct, which tends to evil, or to hurt any one. And on the contrary, it will introduce that uprightness and universal righteousness in practice, that benevolence and beneficence to all, every one taking his proper place, and doing the duties of it, so as to advance the good of the whole; which will spread universal peace, prosperity, and happiness through the whole society, nation, or kingdom; and that nothing can destroy or disturb the peace, good order, and happiness of society, but a deviation from the truths and duties inculcated in the Holy Scriptures.

The Scripture foretells the evils of which the gospel would be the occasion by the abuse of it, and the opposition which would be made to it, and the corruption and apostasy, both in doctrine and practice, which should take place among the professors of Christianity, which would be the occasion of

persecution and innumerable calamities; and these having actually taken place as they were predicted, is so far from being an objection to the truth and excellency of Christianity, that hereby is exhibited a standing evidence of its divine original, and may justly be considered as a pledge of the advantage and happiness which it shall produce in this world in the last days, when it shall have its proper effect on the hearts and lives of mankind, which is also foretold.

The salutary influence Christianity has had already in the world, forming men to be peaceable, harmless, and useful members of society, in the practice of righteousness and goodness, where the dictates of it have been in any measure properly regarded and obeyed, of which there have been many instances, is sufficient to convince every candid mind, that when it shall be no longer abused and perverted to evil purposes by men of perverse minds, but universally understood, embraced, and practised, it will render mankind and society unspeakably more happy than they have ever yet been or can be, while men are ignorant of it, or refuse to regard and obey its dictates. That there is such a happy era coming, is abundantly foretold in the divine oracles, when by the influence and power of the gospel, in the hand of the exalted Redeemer, he will reign universally in the hearts of men, and they shall obey him; and the happy effect of Christianity shall be seen in fact and experience, in extirpating all unrighteousness and violence from the earth, and introducing universal peace, love, and beneficence; when men shall learn war no more, but practise all the social virtues, each one in his proper sphere, honestly and wisely seeking and promoting the greatest public good, and the happiness of every individual, so far as he has ability and advantage.

But the most complete and happy effect of Christianity will take place, and appear in the fulness, importance, and glory of it, when the kingdom of Christ shall be brought to perfection in the future state; when the most beautiful, harmonious, and happy society will be formed by it, in the exercise of love to God and to one another, by which the most perfect union and the highest possible happiness shall exist forever. Here, then, we are to look, to see what is the nature and genuine tendency of Christianity, and what will be the happy effect of it to individuals and to society, when it has overcome all opposition, and shall reign in perfection in the heart and practice of every member of the kingdom of Christ.

II. From this view of Christian practice, and it being thus in all respects suited to promote the good of mankind, and the welfare and happiness of society in this world, arises a

strong and forcible argument that the Bible is from God, and Christianity has a divine original.

They who reject the Bible as a revelation from God do generally confess that the rules of moral conduct contained in it are suited to promote the good of society, and the peace and happiness of mankind in this world; and that Christian morality, and attendance on the institutions of the Christian religion, public worship and instruction, tend to promote civility and good order among men, and the political good of society. In this they appear to be really inconsistent with themselves, and confute their own creed. For this being granted, (and grant it they must, or deny what is evident from reason and fact,) the inference is clear and strong, that the Bible is a revelation from heaven.

Were the Bible a contrivance of man, of one man, or any number of men, who joined to form a plan to promote the good of society, it cannot be reasonably supposed there would be no gross mistakes in it; or that it would be suited to promote the good of society in every age, and different nations of the world, and in all the various and different circumstances of mankind, under all the different forms of civil government, as it really is. Much less can this be supposed, when it is written by different men, unknown to each other, in various ages and nations, and widely differing in their education and particular tastes, habits, and customs. That a book should be written by these men, in such circumstances, on so many different occasions, which, when carefully examined, contains one consistent system of rules for moral life, suited to the comfort and happiness of every individual, and the greatest good of all human societies, and in this respect far exceeding the best code of civil laws that was ever invented, without any light and assistance from this book, is the most incredible position that can be asserted.

CONCLUSION.

Having diligently and with care examined the Holy Scriptures to find what is that system of doctrines, truths, and duties revealed there, and endeavored to state them, and set them in a proper and clear light, and having at length finished what was proposed and undertaken, we may now look back, and, upon a general review of the whole, it is presumed that the following conclusions may be deduced with clear and abundant evidence: —

I. That there is a connection, consistence, and harmony in the system of truths, taken from the Holy Scriptures, stated and explained in the foregoing work.

Care and pains have been taken to support and prove each by the sacred oracles; but it is hoped that all these considered collectively, and the whole put together and joined in one system, will, "like an arch, add strength and firmness to each part," and increase the evidence that every doctrine that has been advanced as important truth is indeed contained in the Bible, and so essential to the whole, that it cannot be excluded and rejected without marring, and in a sense rejecting, all the rest which are connected with it and really implied in it. It is certain, that doctrines inconsistent with each other are not to be found in divine revelation. If any two or more truths are plainly revealed, between which we cannot see the consistence, we may be sure they are consistent with each other, and that it is owing to our ignorance, and to some mistake we are making, that we do not see them to agree perfectly. But when the agreement and consistence of every important doctrine revealed in the Bible is discerned, this gives satisfaction to the mind, and casts a lustre of light and beauty over the whole. No pains, therefore, ought to be spared in examining the Bible with this view, that we may learn what are the doctrines there revealed, and be able to see their connection and consistence.

There is one chain, or consistent scheme of truth, which runs through the whole of the Bible; and every doctrine contained in this divine plan is not only consistent with the rest, but as much a part of the whole as is each link of a chain, so that not one can be broken or taken out, without spoiling or at least injuring the chain. In this view, the foregoing system is offered to the examination of all who are willing to search the Bible daily, and in the light of that, to try every doctrine that has been advanced, that they may find whether they be agreeable to the Scripture and consistent with each other, or

not, and accordingly receive or reject them. It is not pretended, that every particular article which has been mentioned, as matter of conjecture or probable, of which there are some instances, or that is considered as more evident from Scripture than the opposite, is essential to the system. If it be consistent with the whole, it may be received, though it be not essential; and if it should be thought by any not worthy to be received, or not so evident from Scripture as the contrary, it may be rejected, and the contrary believed, perhaps, as consistent with the system of connected truth. Of this every one will judge for himself. And though persons may differ in their judgment on some sentiments of this description, which have been mentioned, yet they may agree in receiving every doctrine which is essential to a system of truth, which is harmonious in every part, and forms one connected, consistent plan of divine truth. But if any doctrine be denied and rejected, which is a necessary part of the system of truth revealed in the Scripture, or which is really implied in it, the connection is hereby broken, and the whole system is destroyed; and every truth contained in it is implicitly given up and denied: as a chain is broken and spoiled by taking away one link of it, and a well-cemented and strong arch is broken down and demolished, by removing a small, but necessary part of it. From this it follows,—

II. That there is no other scheme, or system of supposed truth, which is connected and consistent with itself through the whole of it.

This follows as a necessary conclusion from the foregoing. If that be true, therefore, this must be also true. There is but one consistent plan of religious truth, which is revealed in the Scripture; and another cannot be invented or exist, which is consistent with itself in every part. Therefore, if we can find what is the system of doctrines revealed in the Bible, (and this we may and shall do, if it be not wholly our own fault,) we may be sure no other which is throughout consistent can be found, or is possible. As every divine, revealed truth is perfectly consistent with the whole truth, and every doctrine comes in to make and complete one whole, and is so connected as to make one uniform system, which is not capable of any alteration without rendering it imperfect, so error and false doctrine is always necessarily inconsistent with itself, and no system of error can be invented, which is not inconsistent, and does not imply a contradiction. Thus error is always crooked, and cannot be made straight. False doctrines may be and often have been advanced, and formed into a sort of a system, and have a degree of connection and agreement

with each other, and may be joined with some truths, and be made to appear plausible, and even consistent with all truth, to a superficial, undiscerning eye, and especially to a mind filled with prejudices against the truth, and real disgust of it. But when these doctrines, or this system of errors, are critically examined by a discerning mind, they will be found to imply gross inconsistencies and contradictions; and a mind thus prejudiced, and disaffected with the great truths of divine revelation, may view them as inconsistent with reason and with each other, and think he finds innumerable contradictions in the Bible, and consequently reject it, and embrace what appears to him a more consistent, or at least a more pleasing scheme. But nothing is obtained by this but a temporary, pleasing dream and delusion, which, when properly examined, will appear to consist in confusion and self-contradiction, and, if followed in the natural and genuine tendency of it, will land the infidel in total darkness and universal scepticism, the greatest of all contradictions and absurdities. This has been verified by numerous facts in the Christian world, and instances of it are multiplying at this day.

Those doctrines which are inconsistent with the absolute supremacy and independence of God; his omniscience, unchangeableness, and infinite felicity; his infinite wisdom, rectitude, and goodness, must be false doctrines; and all that are connected with them, and follow from them, must be also contrary to the truth, and are an implicit denial of the being of the true God, and inconsistent with any proper acknowledgment of him. The denial of the decrees of God, and that he hath foredained whatsoever comes to pass, and all those doctrines which are implied in this and follow from it, are inconsistent with this true character of God, and, therefore, are false doctrines, and an implicit denial of the being of the only true God, and inconsistent with all true piety, and, if followed in their true consequences, will lead to universal scepticism, darkness, and delusion.

Those tenets relating to human liberty, and that moral agency of man necessary in order to render him capable of virtue or vice, praise or blame, which are inconsistent with the decrees of God fixing all events and all the actions of men, are inconsistent with the divine character, and even with the existence of God; are inconsistent with the Holy Scripture, and are inconsistent with themselves, implying self-contradiction, and the greatest absurdity; which, it is supposed, has been in some measure made manifest in the foregoing work. And without mentioning more particulars, it is left to the candid, considerate reader to examine every doctrine which has

been proposed in this view; and it is presumed that he will find the whole, and especially all the leading sentiments, not only consistent with each other, but with the being, perfections, and character of God, revealed in the Scripture; and that no other scheme of doctrine can be consistent with these, or with itself, but tends to infidelity, and to remove all important religious truth: and if so, and he be disposed to receive the truth in the love of it, his mind will by this be more established in the truth, and know it, and that no lie is of the truth, but that this is the true God and eternal life. (1 John ii. 21; v. 20.) And the farther he proceeds in the line of truth, and the more clear and comprehensive view he obtains of it, the greater will be his confidence and assurance that this is the only system of doctrines which is agreeable to the divine perfections, the Word of God, and with itself, and that these are the doctrines which are according to godliness; and the greater satisfaction and joy will he have in contemplating, loving, and obeying them.

III. It appears from the whole of the foregoing, that it is of great importance that the doctrines and truths contained in divine revelation should be understood, believed, and loved; that this is necessarily implied in the exercise and practice of true religion, without which there is no salvation.

If this were not important and necessary, there would be little or no need of a divine revelation. This is a revelation of a system of truth and of duty, the foundation and reason of which is the revealed truth, and all obedience consists in knowing, loving, and obeying the truth; therefore, were there no doctrines, no truth and articles of faith revealed, no duty or obedience could be enjoined or known. The Bible reveals a system of truth. It reveals the being and character of God; his works and designs; the state and character of man; the person and character of the Redeemer; his work and designs, and the way of salvation by him; what God does, and what man must be and do, in order to his salvation. The Bible opens the invisible world to men, and sets before them the great, important truths relating to the invisible, eternal kingdom of Christ; and there cannot be one exercise of piety or charity, or any duty of either of these performed by any man, unless it be in the view of those revealed truths, or in conformity to them.

The Holy Scripture, therefore, represents the knowledge and belief of the truth as necessary to salvation; that faith, without which men cannot be saved, is "the belief of the truth." "He that believeth shall be saved." This supposes some truth to be believed; and what can this be but the truths of the

gospel, the truth to which Christ came to bear witness? Were there no revealed truths, there would be nothing to be believed; no objects of faith; for faith is a belief of the truth. Surely none will say saving faith consists in believing nothing, or in believing a lie! Christ speaks of the knowledge of the truth as necessary in order to salvation, and peculiar to his followers. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John vii. 17.) "And ye shall know *the truth*, and *the truth* shall make you free." (John viii. 32.) "Sanctify them through *thy truth; thy word is truth*." (John xvii. 17.) "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) The apostle Paul represents the great design of the gospel to be, to bring Christians to a union in knowledge and faith, or a belief and practice of truth. "Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every *wind of doctrine*, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait *to deceive;* but *speaking the truth in love*, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. iv. 14, 15.) He speaks of the *doctrine which is according to godliness*, as necessary to be known and obeyed by every Christian. (1 Tim. vi. 3.) He directs Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words," which he had heard of him. (2 Tim. i. 13.) By the form of sound words, nothing can be meant but the system of gospel doctrines which the apostle taught, and in which he had instructed Timothy; and he was to hold fast those sound words, those wholesome, important, solid truths, by meditating upon them, and maintaining and preaching them; which is the same with holding and preaching *sound doctrines*, and being sound in the faith, which he repeatedly mentions.

And the knowledge and belief of the truth revealed in the Bible is so important and essential to a Christian, that all Christian practice is denoted by obeying the truth. "Obeying from the heart the form of doctrine which has been delivered to them." (Rom. vi. 17.) "Doing the truth, and walking in the truth." (John iii. 21. 3 John 4.) And Christians are exhorted to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) The faith which had been delivered to the church can be nothing but the system of doctrines contained in divine revelation; the truths implied and exhibited in the gospel, which were to be believed and maintained by Christians. The apostle Paul, in all his epistles,

shows how important the doctrines and truths of the gospel are, and the necessity of their being understood and embraced, in order to be saved; that the gospel consists essentially in these, which, therefore, is overthrown and destroyed, by embracing and promoting the opposite errors. Christ says to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, *that I should bear witness unto the truth.*" (John xviii. 37.) By *the truth*, here, is not meant one particular truth, but all the truths and doctrines of divine revelation; the system of truth in which the gospel consists. This sets the importance of the doctrines of the gospel, and the necessity of understanding, believing, and practising them, in a striking light. For to oppose, or neglect and live in ignorance of these, is to oppose or slight that which Christ came into the world to establish and promote. If the doctrines of the gospel be rejected, or overlooked and not understood, the only foundation of Christian faith and practice is removed, and there remains nothing to be believed, and no duty to be done.

Hence it appears how contrary to reason and Scripture, and to common sense, that position is, which has been espoused and maintained by many, either expressly or by implication, viz.: that it is of no importance what men believe, or whether they believe the truths contained in divine revelation or not, if their external conduct be regular and good. This position is of the most dangerous and evil tendency; for it wholly sets the gospel aside, and excludes that as altogether needless, which Christ says he came into the world to establish and promote. According to this, it is of no importance whether Christians act from principle or not, or from what principle they act, if they act from any; or whether they believe or understand one truth contained in the gospel, or disbelieve and reject all. This makes all creeds and confessions of faith, or bearing witness to the truth, entirely useless and vain; and according to this, no candidate for admission into a church or to the work of the ministry ought to be examined as to his understanding and knowledge, or belief of any doctrine contained in divine revelation, as any qualification necessary in order to his being admitted; for however ignorant he may be of the principles of Christ, or whatever he believes, he may be as good a Christian, and as fit for an officer and teacher in the church, as any other person whatever.

And the directions and commands which the apostle Paul gave to Timothy and Titus, respecting the sound doctrines of the gospel, were highly improper; or, at least, are out of date now. Such are the following: "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some that they teach

no other doctrine. Take heed to thyself *and to thy doctrine.* If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *to the doctrine which is according to godliness*, he is proud, knowing nothing. *Hold fast the form of sound words*, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (1 Tim. i. 3; iv. 16; vi. 3, 4. 2 Tim. i. 13; ii. 2.) "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God holding fast the *faithful word*, as he hath been taught, that he may be able *by sound doctrine* both to exhort and to convince gainsayers, whose mouths must be stopped. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be *sound in the faith.* But speak thou the things which become *sound doctrine.* In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; *in doctrine showing uncorruptness*, gravity, sincerity; sound speech that cannot be condemned." (Tit. i. 7, 9, 11, 13; ii. 1, 7, 8.)

The consequence and evil tendency of the sentiment now under consideration appears from fact. That which is now called liberality of sentiment and catholicism, which is spreading far and wide, and is celebrated by multitudes as a most excellent, noble way of thinking, has its foundation in this. This liberality and catholicism discards all attachment to any particular system of truth, or belief of any distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, as useless and hurtful, and holds that it is no matter what a man's religious creed or practice is, or whether he regards any, or not; as he may be a good man, and go to heaven without any thing of this kind. This really renounces the Bible, and paves the way to infidelity; and this leads on to the darkness and horrors of atheism itself.

IV. From the foregoing system of truths and duties, which is contained in the Bible, and taken wholly from it, arises the most clear and satisfying evidence that it is a revelation from God, and no human invention; "but holy men of God have spoken and written it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The evidence that the Bible contains a divine revelation has been in some measure exhibited and considered in the first chapter of this system, especially what is called the external evidence. And some of the internal evidence was mentioned, and it was observed, that this would be made to appear in the clearest and most advantageous light, by prosecuting the inquiry concerning the doctrines and duties revealed and inculcated in this book, which was then proposed. This is now finished; and upon a careful review of the whole, must it not

be evident to every attentive, honest, candid mind, that in this book only is to be found such a system of truth, which could not be contrived or even thought of by man, but must be from God; that it contains a system of doctrines and commands, which man's wisdom does not teach, and never can, but which the Holy Ghost alone teacheth?

Here the true God is represented in his glorious character, subsisting in a manner infinitely above our comprehension; yet suited, so far as we can conceive, most perfectly to accomplish his revealed designs, and to raise creatures, the objects of his love, to the highest happiness. He is clothed with unlimited power, wisdom, and goodness, absolutely independent, self-sufficient, and all-sufficient, and has fixed on a plan of operation which is wise and good, like himself; including all his works, and every event that shall ever take place, suited in the highest degree to glorify himself, and effect the highest good and happiness of the creation; and they must be blessed who love and trust in him. His law is perfectly right, wise, and excellent, and expresses the moral character and perfections of God; is infinitely important, and must stand forever as the only rule of moral rectitude, and every one must be happy so far as he is conformed to it. Here rebellion against God, and violation of this law, is represented in the infinitely evil and malignant nature of it; and all the dispensations and works of God, and his conduct towards his creatures, are suited and designed to make the clearest and most lasting display of this. Here is revealed the way in which mankind are become universally sinful, mortal, and miserable; and the infinite guilt and misery of their state is discovered, and that they are totally ruined and lost in themselves. This lays the only foundation for the discovery of infinite benevolence and sovereign grace in the redemption of man, and is the ground of the existence and revelation of the person, character, and works of the Redeemer, and salvation by him; and every thing relating to redemption is in the highest degree suited to make the brightest and most glorious manifestation of the power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, truth, and faithfulness of God, and his infinite displeasure with the sinner, to humble man, and show his absolute and entire dependence on God, consistent with the infinite vileness and criminality of the least deviation, even in heart, from perfect obedience to his law; to discover the infinite evil of the just consequence of sin, and set before creatures the reasonableness and importance of obedience, and the strongest motives that are possible to avoid every sin, and fear and obey God. And every truth of divine revelation is levelled against the sin and rebellion of

man; and every thing included in redemption is perfectly suited to form the redeemed to the most beautiful, sweet, perfect holiness, and to raise them to the highest happiness and glory; and while eternal happiness on the one hand, and endless misery on the other, are set before men, and one or the other must be the certain portion of every one, according to his conduct in this life in embracing the gospel and obeying the Redeemer, or rejecting him and living in sin, this tends to solemnize every mind and fill every one with the greatest concern, and awaken him to the utmost exertions to escape the one and obtain the other, and "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling."

And the exercise and the practice of piety, righteousness, and benevolence in all the branches of religion and Christian morality, which consist in conformity of heart and life to the doctrines and precepts contained in the Scripture, is the only way to render every man happy in this life, in their various connections and proper business, and in the use and enjoyment of the things of this world; and were this to take place universally, it would necessarily form men into the most happy society that can take place in this state, and at the same time rectify and enlarge their hearts, and raise their pleasing hope and prospect of glory, and honor, and immortality in the favor of God, and the society of all his friends, in the everlasting kingdom of the Redeemer, in consequence of their patient continuance in well-doing.

When all this, and more which might be mentioned, and will naturally come into the view of him who properly attends to the subject, is well considered, together with the external evidence that the Scripture was formed by divine inspiration, mentioned in the first chapter, it must produce a conviction and fixed persuasion that the Bible contains a divine revelation of a system of important saving truth, which is not to be found any where else, and never could have been known or invented by the reason of man in his present corrupt state, had it not been thus revealed from heaven; unless the mind be greatly biased and prejudiced against the truth by the false taste and evil propensities of the heart, by which the reason of man may be so perverted and abused, and the mind so greatly blinded, as to reject the plainest, most consistent, and important truth as gross error and absurdity, and imbibe the most inconsistent and erroneous sentiments in opposition to the truth.

It is true, indeed, that in order to discern the internal evidence of the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and see it in its true, clearest, and most convincing light, the mind must possess a

right taste, and be friendly to true wisdom; for the great and leading truths of divine revelation are more objects of taste than of mere speculative reason, and cannot be discerned in a true light, in their true beauty, excellence and importance, without the former, and by the latter only. Wisdom is seen and justified only by the children of wisdom, and not by the children of folly and vice, who are under the power of a false taste and disposition of mind, which necessarily blinds the mind to the beauty, excellence, and consistence of the things and truths of the highest concern in the moral world. But he who has a true and proper moral taste and discerning, whose heart is disposed to be friendly to heavenly wisdom, is prepared to see the divine original of the Bible, from the system of truths it contains, and the exercises and duties there required, conformable to the doctrines revealed; and to perceive with a peculiar satisfaction and pleasure, the all-convincing evidence, that what the Scripture reveals is divine, and comes from God. He believes, and has the witness within himself, that this is the testimony of God. He has an understanding to know him that is true, and that this is the true God, and eternal life. (1 John v. 9, 10, 20.) This is expressly asserted by Christ. "He that is of God, heareth God's words. Ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; as a shepherd goeth before the sheep, and they follow him; for they know his voice, and a stranger they will not follow." (John viii. 47; x. 4, 5, 27.) And the apostle John says, "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us." (1 John iv. 6.) The same is asserted by the apostle Paul, in plain and strong language. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.) "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 6.)

Nevertheless, persons who are destitute of this right taste, and are at heart and in practice unfriendly to the dictates of true wisdom, and enemies to it, may be rationably convinced, and in this sense believe, that the Bible is a revelation from God. They may be so persuaded of the external evidence of

this, and see so much of the internal evidence in a degree, as to assent to it in their reason and judgment. They may attend to it so much as to be in a degree convinced of their moral blindness, and their want of a new heart and right taste; and that it is wholly owing to this that they do not see and are not pleased and charmed with the glory of the gospel; and that this is altogether their own fault, and that they are, on this account, in a very miserable condition; yea, that they may be in their reason and judgment, in a measure, convinced of all the truths contained in the Bible, while they have no relish for them, and they are in their hearts real enemies to them.

And where this conviction does not take place, it is owing to ignorance or prejudices which take place by a bad education, or from the want of a good one, together with the strong, evil, and corrupt biases of their hearts, and the indulgence of various foolish and hurtful lusts, and to many other things of this kind, by which many have been led to conclude that the real and true doctrines of divine revelation are inconsistent and absurd, and to embrace contrary doctrines more agreeable to the selfishness, pride, and other lusts of men. While others have, from the same evil biases, been prejudiced against the Scriptures, and rejected the Bible as so fabulous, inconsistent, and absurd, as not to be worthy of the regard of a rational man, and have hereby plunged themselves into an abyss of darkness and uncertainty, while they have boasted that they were following the infallible dictates of their own reason.

All these, of every class, however distinguished in some respects, are wholly answerable and blamable for their ignorance, incredulity, and error, and that they do not discern, relish, and love the truths of divine revelation, in a view of their beauty, consistence, and glory, and are not pleased and charmed with the divine character, and that of the Redeemer, displayed in the Bible. For this is as really owing to a shutting the mental eye against the light shining in the Scriptures, and a refusing to come to it and see it, as is a person's shutting his bodily eyes and refusing to admit the light of the sun, when it shines in its meridian brightness; and is as really a voluntary exercise of the governing taste and propensity of the heart opposing the light of the truth, as any other exercise of heart of which man is capable, though there may be a difference in many respects. How criminal, then, is all infidelity, and turning away from the truth revealed in the Scriptures, in all those who live under the gospel! And how awful the consequence!

A TREATISE

ON THE

MILLENNIUM.

SHOWING FROM SCRIPTURE PROPHECY

THAT IT IS YET TO COME; WHEN IT WILL COME; IN WHAT IT WILL CONSIST; AND THE EVENTS WHICH ARE FIRST TO TAKE PLACE, INTRODUCTORY TO IT.

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"This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord."—PSALM cii. 18.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE PEOPLE WHO SHALL LIVE IN THE DAYS OF THE MILLENNIUM.

Hail, ye happy People, highly favored of the Lord!

To you the following treatise on the Millennium is dedicated, as you will live in that happy era, and enjoy the good of it in a much higher degree than it can be now enjoyed in the prospect of it; and that you may know, if this book shall be conveyed down to your time, what is now thought of you, and of the happy day in which you will come on the stage of life. You will be able to see the mistakes which are now made on this head; and how far what is advanced here is agreeable to that which is noted in the Scripture of truth, and a true and proper description of the events which are to take place, and to rectify every mistake. All is therefore humbly submitted to your better judgment.

When you shall learn what a variety of errors, in doctrine and practice, have been, and are now, imbibed and propagated, and in what an imperfect and defective manner they are opposed and confuted, and the truth explained and defended, and observe how many defects and mistakes there are in those writings which contain most truth, and come nearest to the standard of all religious truth, the Holy Scripture, you will be ready to wonder how all this could be, where divine revelation is enjoyed. But your benevolence and candor will make all proper allowances for all the prejudices and darkness which take place in these days, and pity us; while your piety will lead you to ascribe the greater light and advantages which you will enjoy, and your better discerning and judgment, not unto yourselves, but to the distinguishing, sovereign grace of God.

Though you have yet no existence, nevertheless, the faith of the Christians in this and in former ages beholds you "at hand to come;" and realizing your future existence and character, you are greatly esteemed and loved; and the pious have great joy in you, while they are constantly, and with great earnestness, praying for you. They who make mention of the Lord will not keep silence, nor give him any rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. For you they are praying and laboring, and to you they are ministering; and without you they cannot be made perfect. And you will enter into their labors, and reap the happy fruit of their prayers, toils, and sufferings.

They will be in heaven, with the holy angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, when you will come upon the stage in this world; and they will rejoice in you, in your knowledge, benevolence, piety, righteousness, and happiness. And all their past prayers for you will be turned into joy and praise. And you will, in due time, be gathered together with them unto the Lord Jesus Christ, in his eternal kingdom, and join in seeing and praising him forever, ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto the only true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.

INTRODUCTION.

A PARTICULAR history of the church of Christ, from the days of the apostles to this time; of the various changes through which it has passed; of the doctrines which have been taught and maintained; of the discipline, worship, and manners which have taken place; of the grand apostasy in the church of Rome, and of the reformation, etc., might be properly subjoined to the foregoing system, were it not that this has been done by a number of writers already; so that all who are disposed to acquaint themselves with ecclesiastical history, may obtain this information by books already extant; which, at the same time, serve to confirm the truth and divine original of Christianity, by discovering in how many instances the state of the church, and the events which have had a particular respect to it, have been foretold and have taken place according to the predictions. This subject has been particularly illustrated by Mr. Lowman, in his "Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John;" and since, more largely, by Bishop Newton, in his "Dissertation on the Prophecies, which have been remarkably fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world."

A Treatise on the Millennium, however, and of the future state of the church of Christ, from this time to the end of the world, as it is predicted and described in divine revelation, is thought proper and important, not only as it has been more than once referred to in the preceding work, but as it appears not to be believed by many, and not to be well understood by more, or attended to by most, as an impor-

tant event, full of instruction, suited to support, comfort, and encourage Christians in the present dark appearance of things, respecting the interest of Christ and his church, and to animate them to faith, patience, and perseverance in obedience to Christ, putting on the hope of salvation for a helmet; and to excite them more earnestly to pray for the advancement and coming of the kingdom of Christ, of which kingdom, as it is to take place in this world, or of Christianity itself, there cannot be so clear, full, and pleasing an idea, if the Scripture doctrine of the Millennium be kept out of view.

In the first three centuries after the apostles, the doctrine of the Millennium was believed and taught; but so many unworthy and absurd things were by some advanced concerning it, that it afterwards fell into discredit, and was opposed, or passed over in silence, by most, until the reformation from Popery; and then a number of enthusiasts advanced so many unscriptural and ridiculous notions concerning it, and made such a bad improvement of it, that many, if not most of the orthodox, in opposing them, were led to disbelieve and oppose the doctrine in general, or to say little or nothing in favor of the doctrine, in any sense or view of it.

But few of the most noted writers of the last century in Britain, or in other parts of the Protestant world, have said any thing to establish or explain this doctrine; and they who have mentioned it do appear, at least the most of them, not to have well understood it. In the present century, there has been more attention to it; and the Scriptures which relate to it have been more carefully considered and explained by a number of writers, and it has been set in a more rational, scriptural, and important light than before. Dr. Whitby has written a Treatise on the Millennium; and Mr. Robertson and Mr. Lowman have asserted and explained it, in some measure, in their exposition of the Book of the Revelation by the apostle John, especially the beginning of the twentieth chapter of that book; and the late President Edwards attended much to this subject, and wrote upon it more than any other divine in this century. In the year 1747, he pub-

lished a book, entitled "An humble attempt to promote explicit agreement, and visible union of God's people, in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, pursuant to Scripture promises and prophecies concerning the last time;" in which he produces the evidence from Scripture that such a day is yet to come. And in a posthumous publication of his, entitled "A History of the Work of Redemption," this subject is brought into view, and particularly considered. There is also extant a sermon on the Millennium, by the late Dr. Bellamy; and other writers have occasionally mentioned it; and this subject appears to be brought more particularly into view in the public prayers and preaching, and in conversation, in this age, than in former times, and the doctrine of the Millennium is more generally believed and better understood.

This is rather an encouragement to attempt further to explain and illustrate this important, pleasing, useful subject, in which every Christian is so much interested, than a reason why nothing more should be said upon it. The subject is far from being exhausted; and as the church advances nearer to the millennial state, we have reason to think the predictions in divine revelation respecting it will be better understood, and the minds of Christians will be more excited to great attention to this subject, and strong desires to look into those things, and to earnest longings and prayers for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, as it will take place in that day; and all this is to be effected by means and proper attempts and exertions. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

The prophecies of events which are yet to take place cannot be so fully understood before these events come to pass as they will be when they are fulfilled, and there is great danger of making mistakes about them; and it is certain that many have made mistakes, since they have made very different and opposite constructions of the same predictions, and, therefore, all cannot be right. So far as the prophecies which respect the Millennium, of which there are many, can be understood, and the real meaning of them be made

plain, by a careful and diligent attention to them and comparing them with each other, men may go on safe ground, and be certain of their accomplishment; and whatever is a plain and undeniable consequence from what is expressly predicted, is equally revealed in the prediction, as an event, or circumstance of an event, necessarily included in it. But every opinion respecting future events, which is matter of conjecture only, however probable it may be in the view of him who proposes it, ought to be entertained with modesty and diffidence.

The following Treatise on the Millennium is not designed so much to advance any new sentiments concerning it, which have never before been offered to the public, as to revive and repeat those which have been already suggested by some authors, which are thought to be very important, and ought to be understood and kept constantly in the view of all, in order to their having a proper conception of the church of Christ in this world, and reading the Scriptures to their best advantage and greatest comfort; though perhaps something will be advanced respecting the events which, according to Scripture, are to take place between the present time and the introduction of the happy state of the church, which have not been before so particularly considered.

A

TREATISE ON THE MILLENNIUM.

SECTION I.

In which it is proved from Scripture that the Church of Christ is to come to a State of Prosperity in this World, which it has never yet enjoyed; in which it will continue at least a Thousand Years.

The first revelation of a Redeemer, in the prediction spoken to the serpent, may be considered as implying the destruction of the kingdom of the devil in this world, by the wisdom and energy of Christ. "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) Satan has bruised the heel of Christ in the sufferings and dishonor he has been instrumental of bringing upon him, and in the opposition he has made to the interest and church of Christ in this world; and it is natural to suppose that Christ shall bruise his head in this world, by destroying his interest and kingdom among men, and gaining a conquest over him, in the struggle and war which has taken place between the Redeemer and seducer of men; and by the Redeemer's *bruising the head* of the serpent, is signified that he will not destroy him by the mere exertion of his power, but that by his superior wisdom he will confound and defeat Satan in all his subtlety and cunning, on which he depends so much, and by which he aims to disappoint Christ and defeat him in his designs. And by this he will make a glorious display of his wisdom, as well as of his power, while he discovers the craftiness of Satan to be foolishness, and disappoints him in his devices, carrying all the counsel of this cunning, froward enemy headlong. If all this could not be gathered from this passage, considered by itself, yet that this is the real meaning will perhaps appear from what has already taken place in accomplishing this prediction, and from other prophecies respecting this, some of

which are to be brought into view in the sequel; without which the full meaning of this first promise could not be known.

In order to bruise the head of the serpent, in this sense, most effectually, and turn his boasted wisdom and cunning into foolishness, and entirely defeat him in this way, he must have opportunity and advantage to try his skill and power, and practise all his cunning, in opposing Christ and the salvation of men, and in this way be overcome and wholly defeated in the ruin of his interest and kingdom among men; so that all his attempts shall turn against himself, and be the occasion of making the victory and triumph of the Redeemer greater, more perspicuous, and glorious, in the final prevalence of his kingdom on earth, by drawing all men to him, and destroying the works and kingdom of Satan in this world, and setting up his own on the ruins of it, and so as to turn all the attempts and works of the devil against him, and render the whole subservient to his own interest and kingdom. And thus the coming and kingdom of Christ will be "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." When the sun rises in a clear morning, after a dark night, attended with clouds, rain, and storms, the morning is more pleasant, beautiful, and glorious, and the grass springs and grows more fresh and thrifty than if it had not been preceded by such a stormy night. So the prosperity and glory of the church, when the Sun of righteousness shall rise upon it with healing in his beams, will be enjoyed to a higher degree and be more pleasant and glorious, and Christ will be more glorified than if it had not been preceded by a dreadful night of darkness, confusion, and evil by the wickedness of men and the power and agency of Satan.

The words above cited are the last words of David the prophet and sweet psalmist of Israel, and are a prophecy of the glorious event now under consideration. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake by me. 'He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. xxiii. 2–4.) The first words may be rendered so as to give the true sense more clearly: "He who is to rule over men (i. e., the Messiah) is just, ruling in the fear of God." The words *must be*, in our translation, are not in the original, and the helping verb *is*, which is commonly not expressed, but understood, in the

Hebrew, should have been supplied: "He that ruleth, or is to rule over men, *is* just." This is evidently a prophecy concerning Christ, his church and kingdom, when he shall take to himself his great power, and reign in his kingdom, which shall succeed the reign of Satan during the four preceding monarchies, which were first to take place, which will be more particularly explained as we proceed in examining the prophecies of this great event, *the latter-day glory;* and that these words of David are a prediction of the reign of Christ on earth, after the long prevalence of Satan and wicked men, is further evident from the words which follow, relative to the same thing: "But the sons of Belial shall *all of them* as thorns be thrust away because they cannot be taken with hands. But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place."

Exactly parallel with this prophecy is that of the prophet Malachi: "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as the calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. iv. 1–3.)

But to return from this, which may seem to be some digression or anticipation. The great and remarkable promise, so often made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and more than once mentioned by the apostles, will next be considered. This promise was made to Abraham, and of him, three times. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 3.) "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." (Chap. xviii. 18.) "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Chap. xxii. 18.) And this same promise is made to Isaac: "I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Chap. xxvi. 4.) And to Jacob: "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Chap. xxviii. 14.) The apostle Peter mentions this promise as referring to the days of the gospel. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Acts iii. 25.) The apostle Paul speaks of this promise as referring to Christ, and all who

believe in him, making him to be the promised seed, and believers in him to be those exclusively who are blessed in him, in whom the promised good takes place. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 7–9, 16.)

This prediction and promise is very express and extensive, that all the families, kindreds and nations of the earth should be blessed in Christ, by their becoming believers in him. This has never yet taken place, and cannot be fulfilled, unless Christianity and the kingdom of Christ shall take place and prevail in the world to a vastly higher degree, and more extensively and universally, than has yet come to pass; and all nations, all the inhabitants of the earth, shall become believers in him, agreeable to a great number of other prophecies, some of which will be mentioned in this section.

The reign of Christ on earth, with his church and people, and the happiness and glory of that time, is a subject often mentioned, predicted, and celebrated in the Book of Psalms. To mention all that is there spoken with reference to that happy time, would be to transcribe great part of that book. Only the following passages will now be mentioned, which are thought abundantly to prove that the kingdom of Christ is to prevail and flourish in this world as it has never yet done; and the church is to be brought to a state of purity, prosperity, and happiness on earth, which has not yet taken place, and so as to include all nations and fill the world.

In the second Psalm it is predicted and promised that the Son of God shall inherit and possess all nations to the ends of the earth; which necessarily implies that his church and kingdom shall be thus extensive, reaching to the ends of the earth, and including all the nations and men on earth. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." By Zion here is meant, as in numerous other places in the prophecies, the church of Christ, of which mount Zion was a type.

The twenty-second Psalm contains a prophecy of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow; and of the

latter it is said, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied. They shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live forever. All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations; for evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Ps. xxxvii. 9–11.) This is a prediction of an event which has never taken place yet. Evil doers and the wicked have in all ages hitherto possessed the earth, and flourished and reigned in the world. When it is promised that they who wait upon the Lord and the meek shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace, the meaning must be, that persons of this character will yet have the possession of the earth and fill the world, when no place shall be found for the wicked, as they shall be all destroyed, and their cause wholly lost; and all of this character who have lived before this time, and waited upon the Lord in the exercise of meekness, shall flourish and live in their successors, and in the prosperity and triumph of the cause and interest in which they lived and died. This is agreeable to other prophecies of this kind, as will be shown in the sequel. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Who can believe that this has ever yet been? But few of mankind, compared with the whole, have yet turned unto the Lord. By far the greatest part of the nations of the earth, even to the ends of the world, have worshipped, and do now worship, false gods and idols. But when *all the ends of the world* shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him, then the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The whole of the sixty-seventh Psalm is a prediction of the same event and of the same time, which is yet to come. It is a prayer of the church that such a time may take place, at the same time expressing her assurance that it was coming; and the whole is a prophecy of it. "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among *all nations*. Let the people praise thee, O God; let *all the people* praise thee. O, let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations

upon earth. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and *all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*"

The seventy-second Psalm, the title of which is, "A Psalm for Solomon," contains a prophecy of Christ and his kingdom, of whom Solomon was an eminent type. The Psalmist looks beyond the type to the antitype, and says things which can be applied to the latter only, and are not true of the former, considered as distinct from the latter, which is common in the Scripture, in such cases. Here it is said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen."

"Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations." (Ps. lxxxii. 8.) In this Psalm the rulers and judges among men are accused of unrighteousness, and condemned; and then the Psalmist concludes with the words now quoted, which refer to some future event, in which God should judge the earth and inherit all nations, in a sense in which he has not yet done it. In the second Psalm, the heathen, i. e., the nations, all nations, are given to Christ for his inheritance; and here the same thing is expressed, "Thou shalt inherit all nations;" and by his *judging the earth*, is meant his reigning and subduing the inhabitants of the earth to a cordial subjection to himself; which will be more evident by what follows, where we shall find the same thing predicted.

The ninety-sixth Psalm relates wholly to redemption by Christ, to the happiness and glory of his kingdom, and his reign on earth. "O, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. *Fear before him, all the earth.* Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth." What is here foretold is to take place

before the end of the world and the general judgment; and it relates to the whole world, all the earth and the nations in it; the kingdom and reign of Christ is to extend to all of them; and his coming to judge the earth and the world in righteousness intends his reigning in righteousness, and bringing all nations to share in the blessings of his salvation and kingdom. Agreeably to this, it is said of Christ, by Isaiah and Jeremiah, "Behold a king shall reign *in righteousness*. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute *judgment and righteousness* in the land," or in the earth. (Isa. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxxiii. 15.)

Great part of the prophecy of Isaiah relates to the flourishing and happy state of the kingdom of Christ, and the prosperity of the church in the latter days. When he foretells the return of the people of Israel from the Babylonish captivity, which was a type of the deliverance of the church of Christ from spiritual Babylon, and from all her enemies in this world, visible and invisible, he commonly looks forward to the latter, and keeps that in view, and says things of it which are not true of the former, and cannot be applied to it; and as Zion, Jerusalem, and Judah, and Israel were types of the church and kingdom of Christ, as including all nations, the former are commonly mentioned only as types, being put for and signifying the latter; and when the gospel day, the coming of Christ, and his church and kingdom, are brought into view, all that is included in these is comprehended, and commonly chief reference is had to the millennium, or the day of the flourishing of the kingdom of Christ on earth, which is in a peculiar manner and eminently the day of salvation, and will issue in the complete redemption of the church, at and after the day of judgment. He who reads this prophecy with care and discerning will be convinced of the truth of these observations; and in any other view, great part of it cannot be understood.

Only part of the many prophecies of the glory and extent of the kingdom of Christ in this world, which are contained in this book, will be now mentioned, as those which are most express and clear with reference to the subject in view. They who attentively read this prophecy will find many more which refer to the same event.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house

of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. ii. 2–4.) It is certain that this prophecy has not been yet fulfilled, except in a very small degree, as the beginning and first fruits of it.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 1–9.)

This is evidently a prophecy of Christ and his kingdom on earth. He shall judge and reprove for the meek of the earth, and slay all the wicked on earth, that the meek may inherit it; which is exactly agreeable to the fore-mentioned prophecy in the thirty-seventh Psalm. "Evil doers shall be cut off, and yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; but the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace." And this universal peace and harmony among men, which shall take place at that time, is expressed in the prophecy before us, in very strong, figurative language; by the wolf dwelling with the lamb, etc. And the ground and reason of this is given: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." By the knowledge of the Lord is meant true religion, or real Christianity, which consists most essentially in benevolence and goodness, as has been shown. So far as this takes place, love, peace, and the

most happy concord and union are promoted, and every thing contrary to this suppressed and banished. Therefore, when this shall take place universally among men, and fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, there will be nothing to destroy or hurt, but universal safety, peace, and love. No such time has ever yet been known. The true knowledge of God has been so far from filling the earth, that gross darkness has covered much the greatest part of it, and real Christianity has been confined to narrow bounds; and but very few of mankind have attained to the character of true Christians, even where the gospel has been published; and a horrible scene of oppression, cruelty, war, and murder has spread all over the earth, and will continue to do so, until Christ shall arise and smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slay the wicked with the breath of his lips, and cause the earth to be filled with the knowledge of God. Such a happy time is yet future, and will certainly come.

The twenty-fifth chapter contains a prophecy of the same event, some of which is worthy to be transcribed. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the less, well refined; and he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the veil that is spread over *all nations*. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation."

The gospel is here represented by a rich feast, and it is promised that all people and nations shall have their eyes opened to see it; and all reproach and opposition to the church of Christ shall be taken away from off all the earth; and there shall be universal joy in the salvation for which the church has long waited, and which shall come in the last day.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall

be revealed, and *all flesh shall see it together;* for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. xl. 1, etc.)

This is a prophecy of the times of the gospel, as it is thus applied in the New Testament. It does refer to the first introduction and the coming of Christ into the world, but is not confined to this. It gives a comprehensive view of this great salvation, and the favor and glory which is to come to the church of Christ in this world, and looks forward to the day when the glory of the Lord shall be so revealed that all flesh, that is, all nations, all mankind, shall see it together. This has not yet been fulfilled, but is to be accomplished in a time yet to come, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 14.) All that precedes this day is preparatory to it, as the ministry of John the Baptist was an introduction to it, and more immediately prepared the way for Christ.

From the beginning of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah to the end of the sixty-sixth chapter, with which his prophecy closes, there is almost one continued series of predictions and promises of good, salvation, happiness, and glory to the church of Christ, which have principal reference to the latter day, when the millennium shall take place, and when they will have their chief accomplishment. It will be sufficient to answer the end now proposed, to mention the following passages: —

Salvation by Christ is frequently represented as actually extended *to the ends of the earth*, which has not yet been accomplished. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth;* for I am God, and there is none else. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation *unto the end of the earth.* The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of *all nations*, and *all the ends of the earth* shall see the salvation of our God." (Isa. xlv. 22: xlix. 6; lii. 10.) The same phrase is used by the prophet Micah: "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide; for now shall he be great *unto the ends of the earth.*" (Chap. v. 4.)

The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah is filled with comfort and promises to the church, as also are the preceding chapters. The following expressions may be particularly noted: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles

shall come to thy light, and kings to thy rising. Therefore, thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." No such event has been yet. When this shall take place, all nations, all mankind, must belong to the church; for all others shall be *utterly wasted.* The same thing is foretold by the prophet Zechariah. (Chap. iii. 14–19.)

The sixty-first chapter of Isaiah is on the same subject, and the sixty-second throughout. Upon such promises made to the church, she breaks forth into joy and praise, in the prospect of the good that is coming to her. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth *before all nations.*" "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem *a praise in the earth.* Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed *unto the end of the world,* Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken." (Isa. lxii. 1, 2, 6, 7, 10–12.) "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord. Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her,

all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." (Isa. lxvi. 8–12.)

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, the following passages are found, which predict the utter abolition of idolatry on earth and the conversion of all nations to Christianity, which events have not yet come to pass: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem (i. e., the church) the throne of the Lord, (i. e., the Lord shall reign in and by it;) and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; (i. e., shall become members of the church;) neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." (Jer. iii. 17.) They shall wholly renounce their idolatry, and all their wickedness. "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. They are vanity, and the work of errors. In the time of their visitation they shall perish." (Chap. x. 11, 15.) According to this prophecy, this will take place while this earth and the heavens remain, and, therefore, before the day of judgment.

This subject is set in a very clear light in the Book of Daniel the prophet. It is there repeatedly declared that the church or kingdom of Christ shall be the last kingdom on earth; that it shall succeed four preceding monarchies, become great and fill the world, and exist in a very happy and glorious state on earth. By the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and the interpretation of it in the second chapter of Daniel, the kingdom of Christ is set in this light: The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw represents four kingdoms or monarchies, viz., 1. The Babylonian. 2. The Medo-Persian, or that of the Medes and Persians. 3. The Macedonian or Grecian. 4. The Roman. These are all to pass away and be destroyed, to make way for a fifth kingdom, which shall be great, and fill the world, which is described in the dream by the following words: "Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and *filled the whole earth*." This is interpreted by Daniel in the following words: "And in the days of these kings shall the

God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and gold, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter." That this last kingdom is the kingdom of Christ, there can be no doubt.* The same is called in the New Testament "the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven." This is to succeed the kingdom of the Romans, and to fill the whole earth, in which all nations, all mankind, will be included. The Roman empire or kingdom is not yet wholly destroyed; therefore, what is here predicted of the kingdom of Christ is not yet accomplished, but shall take place in some future day. Nothing can be plainer and more certain than this.

In the seventh chapter of this book there is a representation of the same thing in a vision which Daniel had. He saw the same four empires or kingdoms in their succession represented by four great, wild, fierce beasts, coming up from the sea. The last kingdom turned into a little horn which came up last; and Daniel "beheld till this fourth beast with the little horn was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." And then the vision proceeds, "I saw in the night vision, and beheld one like the Son of man come with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This vision is briefly explained to Daniel in the following words: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, (i. e., kingdoms,) which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Daniel requested a more particular explanation of the fourth beast, and of the ten horns, and of the little horn, "even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. And the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." And he

* See Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 426, 427, etc.

is then told that "the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. *And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

As in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so in this vision, the fifth and last kingdom is the kingdom of Christ, consisting wholly of saints. It is Jesus Christ whom Daniel saw. "And behold, one like to the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." His kingdom and dominion is universal, including all the inhabitants of the earth; and these shall be all saints or holy persons, as no others can be the proper subjects of this kingdom. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever; and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." The strongest expressions are used and repeated, to assert the universality of this kingdom, comprehending all mankind who shall then live on earth; and it is repeatedly declared that this kingdom shall stand forever. It shall not be destroyed by any succeeding power or kingdom as the former kingdoms were, but shall continue to the end of the world, and then be removed to heaven, to a more perfect and glorious state, and there exist and flourish in the highest perfection forever and ever.

The little horn which was on the beast, and destroyed with the beast, whose body was given to the burning flame, is the pope of Rome, with the kingdom and power, civil and ecclesiastical, of which he is the head.* This beast with this horn is not yet destroyed. When this is done, the kingdom and power of sin and Satan in the world will fall; and then the kingdom of Christ will rise and fill the world, as is predicted

* This is abundantly proved in Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. 1, p. 441–498.

here, and in the second chapter of this book. This is very evident by these prophecies, if there were no other; but this truth is greatly illustrated and established by those predictions of the same event which have been considered, and more so by those which are yet to be mentioned.

The prophet Micah predicted the prosperity of the church of Christ, and the prevalence of his interest and kingdom *in the last days*, (Chap. iv. 1–4; v. 1–4;) and there is a particular prophecy of the same event by Zephaniah. (Chap. iii. 8–12.) This is also particularly foretold by Zechariah: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee." (Chap. ii. 10, 11.) "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; *and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*" (Zech. ix. 9, 10.) The whole of the fourteenth chapter relates chiefly to this great event and happy time, of which only the following words will be transcribed: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark. But it shall be *one day*, which shall be known to the Lord, not day and night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter it shall be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one."

This is a prophecy of the millennial state in figurative language. Then, in the moral world, the church, there shall be no night or darkness, no change of day and night, as there was before, when the church was in a state of affliction, when her days of prosperity were short, and soon succeeded by darkness and night of degeneracy and affliction; but at the time when night used to come on it shall be day, so that it shall be constantly light and day, and the enjoyment of prosperity, light, and holiness without interruption; and there shall be a constant flow of living waters, without any interruption, into all parts of the earth, among all nations; that is, spiritual blessings, consisting in spiritual life, holy joy, and happiness; and then all idolatry and false worship shall be wholly abol-

ished, and Christ shall reign in all the earth, and all nations shall trust in him, and obey him. This prediction agrees exactly with all those which have been mentioned, pointing to the same important, glorious event.

The prophecies in the New Testament foretell the universal spread of Christianity, until all nations shall become the servants of Christ, and that Christ and his people shall reign on earth a thousand years, when Satan shall be cast out of the earth, and his subjects and kingdom shall be destroyed, agreeably to the numerous prophecies in the Old Testament which have been mentioned.

Jesus Christ has foretold this, by the following parables: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which, indeed, is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (Matt. xiii. 31–33.) By the first of those parables Christ teaches that his church and kingdom, though small in the beginning of it, should increase and become great in the world. In the next, he makes an advance, and more fully predicts the universal extent of this kingdom; that the gospel shall not cease to spread and influence the world, till all mankind living on earth, the whole world, shall be formed by it, and imbibe the spirit of it, so as to become the children of this kingdom. If the kingdom of heaven shall not finally prevail and extend to all nations, and fill the whole world, how can this parable be a just or true representation of it? In this view of it, it agrees exactly with many of the prophecies which have been mentioned, and with others which are yet to be considered.

Agreeably to this are the following words of Christ, in which indeed he asserts the same thing: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 31, 32.) What is here foretold by Christ is not yet accomplished, except in a very small part, as the first fruits and pledge of the whole. A foundation for this was laid in the death of Christ, when he was lifted up on the cross; but the prince of this world, the devil, is not yet cast out of the world; nor has Christ yet drawn all men unto him. Christ has drawn great numbers to him, who have become his faithful subjects and servants, and has made great inroads

upon the interest and kingdom of the prince of this world; but very few of mankind, compared with the whole, have been drawn to Christ; by far the greatest number, even in the Christian world, have rejected and opposed him; and the kingdom of Satan has been great and strong, including the most of men who have lived in the world, from the time in which these words were spoken by Christ to this day. Both of these events are, therefore, yet future, and the former is to make way for the latter, or rather, one is included in the other. The same things which are here foretold are predicted in different words, in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, which will be considered. When Christ says he will draw *all men* unto him, he does not mean that every one of mankind shall come unto him; for this is contrary to known fact and to many express declarations of Christ; but that, in consequence of his death, the kingdom of Satan shall be utterly destroyed on earth, and then all nations, even all men then in the world, shall become his voluntary subjects, and believe in him.

This was suited to support and comfort his disciples and friends at that time, when he had been speaking of his own death as at hand, in the view of the glory that should follow his dying on the cross, and served to explain what was spoken by the voice from heaven, in answer to his petition, "Father, glorify thy name." "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John xii. 28.)

What the apostle Paul says in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans of the Jews and Gentiles, which comprehend all mankind, holds forth this same truth. He there speaks of the Jews who were then, the most of them, broken off from the church by unbelief, as yet to come into the kingdom of Christ, even all of them, which he terms their *fulness;* and he says, that when they shall in their fulness be brought in, the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in also. The fulness of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles, must include the whole of all nations. And he speaks of what had taken place in the days of the apostles, in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, as only the first fruits, the root, foundation, and beginning of the whole lump, and the tree which were to follow in the coming in of the Jews and Gentiles, of the whole world, in the fulness thereof. (Rom. xi. 12, 16, 25.)

This leads to recollect the many prophecies by the ancient prophets of the restoration of the Jews to a state of holiness and happiness in the last days, which has not yet come to pass, some of which it may be proper to mention here, as they serve to confirm the point under consideration. The thirty-

fourth, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh chapters of Ezekiel relate chiefly to this event. Though the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon may be implied in this prophecy, and some expressions may have particular reference to that, yet it evidently looks farther, to a deliverance and salvation, of which their return from Babylon was a type or pledge; and there are many things predicted which cannot be applied to the former, and were not true of it, particularly the following: "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; and he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. One king shall be king to them all. And I will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David, my servant, shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children forever, and my servant David shall be their prince forever." (Eze. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 22–25.) By David, Jesus Christ, the Son of David, is meant, as the former was an eminent type of the latter; therefore, this must refer to their restoration and happy state under Christ, which is certainly not yet come, but will take place when there shall be one fold and one shepherd, and Jews and Gentiles shall be united in one church under the Redeemer, which, after the millennium, shall be transplanted from earth to heaven, where the spiritual David will reign over it forever.

The same is foretold by the prophet Hosea. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days." (Chap. iii. 4, 5.) The children of Israel are now in the state here described, without a king, and without a prince, without a sacrifice; for their temple is destroyed, and they cannot go to Jerusalem, and their law forbids them to sacrifice in any other place. They are without an image, without an ephod and teraphim; for they have a great and obstinate aversion from all kinds of idolatry, to which they were once so much addicted. They have been a long time, many days, in this state, and will continue so, until they return and seek Jesus Christ their King, and submit to him, which is yet to come.

These prophecies, and others of the same kind, if they be

considered as having reference to the Jews exclusively, and not including the whole church of Christ in the latter day, composed of Jews and Gentiles, do prove that there is yet to be a time when the church of Christ shall be universal, and include all nations; for it appears from what St. Paul says, that when those prophecies shall be fulfilled to the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles will also come in, and all men in every nation will be subject to Christ, and his kingdom shall be glorious, and fill the world. And in this sense, "all Israel shall be saved."

In the revelation made by Jesus Christ to the apostle John, the final victory and triumph of the church on earth over all her enemies, and the happy state to which it will be brought, which shall continue a thousand years, is, in some respects, more clearly set forth than in the preceding prophecies, by which they are illustrated, and their meaning is more fully fixed and confirmed. Here the general state and circumstances of the church, from the time when the revelation was given to this time, and down to the end of the world, are predicted. Here the afflictions and persecutions, through which the church should pass; the respite which she should have, and victory over the persecuting power of heathen Rome, in the days of Constantine; the grand apostasy which should take place in the church by the rise of the pope and the hierachy of the false church of Rome; the gross idolatry which should be practised in that church; and the violent opposition of this power to the true followers of Christ; their cruel persecutions of them, and shedding their blood, for a thousand two hundred and sixty years; the judgments that should be executed on that corrupt church and her adherents, and on the whole world, for their obstinacy in wickedness; and the final overthrow of the pope and all who support him, and of the kingdom of Satan in the world, and the deliverance of the church of Christ into a state of rest and peace, when this kingdom of Christ shall increase, and spread, and fill the world, and continue in this happy state on earth a thousand years. All this is foretold, much of which is already come to pass; but the most happy and glorious events are yet to come. The great and remarkable things which have come to pass, as they were foretold, are a standing, incontestable evidence and demonstration that the prophecies in this book are from heaven; for it is as certain that none but the omniscient God can know and predict such events, which take place according to the prediction, as it is that this world was made by him. And the events which are come to pass, and are now taking place in the world before our eyes, agreeably to the prophecies in this

book, at the same time that they prove that those predictions are from God, are also a pledge and assurance that the prophecies of things not yet come will be fulfilled in due season.

The subject now in hand will lead more particularly to consider what are the prophecies in this book which relate to the future prosperity of the church and kingdom of Christ in this world, in which all the darkness and afflictions which do attend it, being oppressed and trodden down by enemies, while they prevail and triumph, shall issue; and to show that such a day is certainly coming, according to the predictions which are to be found here.

In the fifth chapter of the Revelation, the four and twenty elders, who represent the church, appear rejoicing and praising Christ in the prospect of their reigning on the earth. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; *and we shall reign on the earth.*" This is spoken of *the church*, and is not literally true of every particular member of it that then actually existed in heaven or on earth. When the church shall reign on earth, consisting of the numerous members who shall then exist in this world, all those who are gone out of the world and are in heaven will reign in and with the church on earth, as members of the same society and kingdom, and will partake in all the joy and glory of this event, in a much higher degree than if they were personally on earth. They will reign in their successors, who represent them, and in the prevalence, victory, and triumph of that cause which is theirs, and in which they lived and died. But this will be more particularly considered hereafter.

"And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.) Here it is asserted, that under the seventh trumpet, which contains all the events from the time of its sounding to the end of the world, all the nations and kingdoms in this world shall become one kingdom under Christ, and shall be wholly swallowed up in this kingdom, which shall not be succeeded or give place to any other kingdom, but shall stand forever. It shall continue the only kingdom on earth to the end of the world, and exist forever in heaven; which is perfectly agreeable to many other prophecies which have been mentioned. The meaning is not, that this event shall follow immediately upon the sounding of the

seventh trumpet, but that this is comprehended in the events of this trumpet, to which all the preceding have respect, and in which they shall issue, as the most important and glorious event, to which all the inhabitants of heaven were attending, and in the prospect of which they had peculiar joy.

The same event is celebrated in heaven, as having actually taken place, in the former part of the nineteenth chapter. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Here the Lord Jesus Christ is represented as reigning as he never had done before; which is the same event which is so often predicted in the Psalms, and by the prophets, especially by Daniel, by the Lord's reigning, that is Christ, and which is mentioned and celebrated in the tenth chapter, and in the twentieth chapter. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." By the bride having made herself ready, and being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, is meant the eminent degree of holiness and moral beauty to which the church will arrive at that day, in the millennial state. This is represented as taking place upon the fall of antichrist and the great whore, the false, idolatrous church of Rome. And it succeeds the overthrow of Satan's kingdom in the world, and not only the destruction of the Roman empire under antichrist, but of all the nations of wicked men; which is described in the sixteenth chapter, verse seventeenth, etc.

And the same event is again represented in the latter part of the nineteenth chapter, and in the beginning of the twentieth. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." From the following description it appears that this person is Jesus Christ, prepared and going forth to destroy his enemies on earth. And an angel is seen standing in the sun, in the most conspicuous place, calling with a loud voice upon all the fowls of the air to come "to the supper of the great God, to eat the flesh of kings and captains, etc., and the flesh of *all men*,

both free and bond, both small and great. And he saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies *gathered together*, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." And the beast and false prophet were destroyed by him; and the remnant of those who joined with the beast and were enemies to Christ were slain by him. This battle, and the destruction of the enemies of Christ, does not follow in time, and is not to take place after the events mentioned in the first part of this chapter, viz., the joy and praise in heaven, upon the reigning of Christ on earth, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, making herself ready, etc., but is a repeated and more particular representation of what is to precede that happy event, which had been before mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, from the thirteenth verse to the end of it. There the kings of the earth, and the whole world, are said to be *gathered together to battle;* "the battle of the great day of God Almighty." So here, "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies are *gathered together to make war* against him that sat on the horse." And there the battle is described as coming on, upon the pouring out of the seventh vial, and great Babylon, which is the same with the beast and the false prophet, and all the enemies of Christ, are destroyed in battle; which is exactly parallel with the war and battle of which there is a more particular description in the nineteenth chapter, and must be one and the same event. This is confirmed by what immediately follows this destruction of the enemies of Christ, in the beginning of the twentieth chapter, which, as has been observed, is the same event with that described in the nineteenth chapter by the marriage of the Lamb, whose bride, that is, the church, was made ready and arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. A more particular and remarkable description of this same thing, in the twentieth chapter, is in the following words: —

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and

reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

A particular explanation of this passage of Scripture will be attempted in the next section. That it does express and confirm the truth which is contained in the numerous prophecies which have been mentioned, and which is set up to be proved in this section, the following observations will show: —

1. This event here predicted is to take place after the overthrow of the Roman anti-Christian kingdom, and the destruction of all the enemies of Christ and his church on earth. This is evident from the account of the destruction of these in the prophecy immediately preceding these words, and upon which the glorious scene opened in this passage is to take place; and the same is predicted in the last part of the sixteenth chapter, as has been shown. This is agreeable to the prophecies of the same event in the Psalms, and by Daniel, and others, viz., that the time of the reign of Christ, and of the saints on earth, shall succeed the destruction of the wicked, and the total overthrow of all the preceding kingdoms and powers in the world, which has been from time to time observed upon them when they were transcribed; and in this very passage, Satan himself is represented as bound and cast out of the earth, and shut up in the bottomless pit, antecedent to the reign of Christ and his followers in the world, which necessarily implies the total ruin of his cause and kingdom on earth, and the extirpation of all the wicked who are his children and servants; therefore, the time here predicted is not yet come.

2. All this is to take place before the end of the world and the day of judgment. This is very evident and certain, since it is said, that when this happy time of a thousand years is ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth; and then, after this, Christ is represented as coming to judgment, of which there is a particular account, and of the final and eternal destruction of all his enemies.

3. Christ is here said to reign, and his saints to reign with him, which, without any doubt, is the same event and the same period which is foretold by Daniel and other prophets, as a most happy and joyful time, when that nation and those men who will not serve Jesus Christ shall be destroyed, and there shall be given to him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and all dominions shall serve him; and the extent and universality of the kingdom of Christ, and of those who reign with him, as including all nations and all men, is supposed and implied in his binding Satan, and casting him out, "that he should *deceive the nations no more*, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Satan is said to deceive the whole world. (Rev. xii. 9.) And when he is cast out of the whole world, Jesus Christ and his people will take possession of it, and reign in all the earth.

4. Christ and his people are to reign on earth A THOUSAND YEARS.* All have not been agreed in the length of time denoted here by a thousand years. Some have supposed that a thousand years is used indefinitely, not to express any precise number of years, but a great number of years, or a long time. But this cannot reasonably be admitted as the sense of the expression here, since this precise number of years is mentioned six times in this passage, which appears inconsistent with its being used in such an indefinite, vague sense; and besides, there is nothing in the connection here, or in the nature or circumstances of the case, to lead any one to understand this number as put indefinitely.

There are others who suppose that these are to be understood to be a thousand prophetical years; that is, as many years as there are days in a thousand literal years, a day being put for a year. According to this way of reckoning, a thousand years are put for three hundred and sixty thousand years; for in that age a year was reckoned to consist of three hundred and sixty days. It is said, that in this Book of Revelation a day is constantly put for a year. A thousand two hundred and sixty days mean so many years, and forty-two months mean as many years as there are days in so many months, reckoning thirty days to each month, as they then did; which, therefore, amount to the same number of years, i. e., one thousand two hundred and sixty years; and a time and times, and half a time, i. e., three years and a half, mean as many years as there are days in three years and a half; which are just as many as there are in forty-two months: that is, one thousand two hundred and sixty years. It is, therefore, concluded that these thousand years must be understood in the same way; that is, that a day is put for a year; which will amount to three hundred and sixty thousand years.

It is acknowledged that this supposition is supported by

* Hence this time is called the MILLENNIUM, which signifies a thousand years.

some color of argument and plausibility; but there are objections to it, some of which will be mentioned.

1. It does by no means follow that these are prophetical years, in the sense mentioned, because a day is put for a year in other places in this prophecy. There may be reasons for putting a day for a year in other instances, and yet there be no reason for putting a thousand years for as many years as there are days in a thousand years in this instance, and, therefore, no reason for understanding them so; and a day is not put for a year in every other instance in this book. The dead bodies of the two witnesses are said to lie in the street of the city three days and a half, (Rev. xi. 9,) which do not mean three years and a half, as no event respecting them can be made consistent with such a meaning.

2. The number, *a thousand years*, being repeated so many times in one short paragraph, seems to be a reason that it is to be understood literally, for just so many years, and not so many prophetical years; especially as there is nothing in this case to lead us to understand it in the latter sense; but it may as consistently with every thing in this book, and this prophecy in particular, and more so, as will be now observed, be understood literally; and it is further to be observed, that there is no instance in this book, or in the whole Bible, where a precise number is so often repeated in the same words, that is not to be understood literally.

3. It seems to be out of all proper proportion to suppose there will be so long a time as three hundred and sixty thousand years of prosperity and happiness, and of great and universal holiness in this world, the habitation of an apostate, sinful race of men, and but six thousand years of evil times. And this does not appear consistent with this world being represented as an *evil world*, as it is in the Scripture, or with its being cursed in consequence of man's rebellion. One thousand years may be an exception out of seven thousand, in which the curse may be mitigated and in a great measure removed; and yet, on the whole, or the whole taken together, it may be considered and called an evil and accursed world, for man's sake; but if there were to be only six thousand years of evil and the curse, and three hundred and sixty thousand years of good and a blessing, it would not, on the whole, be an evil or cursed, but a happy and blessed world.

4. It has been observed, that the natural world is evidently a designed type or shadow of the moral world, especially of the redemption by Christ; and that creating it in six days, and then resting on the seventh, is designed to be a type of bringing the moral world, in the work of redemption, to a state

of rest; that there are to be six thousand years in which every thing with respect to redemption and the kingdom of Christ is to be done and prepared for a seventh thousand years of peace, and rest, and joy in this glorious work. And it will be shown, in the sequel, that there are institutions in the Mosaic ritual which point out the same thing. The apostle Peter seems to allude to this when speaking of the coming of Christ, and the end of the world. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise; but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," etc. (2 Pet. iii. 8–10.) Hence the constant revolution of weeks, consisting of seven days, is an emblem of the revolution of time, which will come to an end when the world has existed seven thousand years. And there has been a tradition among both Jews and Christians agreeable to this sentiment.* Now, this sentiment and tradition suppose that the thousand years of the millennium is but one literal thousand years, or the seventh part of the time in which the world is to stand; and as far as there is any weight in them, oppose and overthrow the notion that the world will not come to an end till it has existed three hundred and sixty thousand years after the millennium shall begin.

5. All the ends of such a day of peace and prosperity, of victory, triumph, and salvation to the church on earth, and of the so much celebrated reign of Christ, with his saints, in this world, will be fully answered in a literal thousand years, so far as it can be learned what they are from Scripture, or man can conceive them to be, as much and as fully answered as they could be in hundreds of thousands of years, or in any supposed length of time.

Satan will be as much defeated, and his kingdom and interest wholly destroyed in the world, the cause of wickedness and evil men will be entirely ruined and lost, and they all banished from the earth. The wisdom, power, grace, truth, and faithfulness of Christ will have a proper and glorious manifestation, by introducing such a state, and continuing it as long as is most for his glory and the best good of his church,

* "There is an old tradition, both among Jews and Christians, that at the end of six thousand years the Messiah shall come, and the world shall be renewed, the reign of the wicked one shall cease, and the reign of the saints upon earth shall begin." — *Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies*, vol. i. p. 490. And again, vol. iii. p. 410, "According to tradition, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints will be the seventh millenary of the world; for, as God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the world, it is argued, will continue six thousand years, and the seventh thousand will be the great *sabbatism*, or holy rest, to the people of God; *one day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2 Pet. iii. 8.)

though it shall continue but a thousand years. The church may have all the reward and enjoyment in that time that it is proper or desirable that it should have on earth; and it may be wisest and best then to take it to a more perfect, happy, and glorious state in heaven. A thousand years will be time enough for Christ to show what he can do in bringing good out of evil, and vindicating his cause and church, and triumphing gloriously over all opposition from earth and hell, and filling the world with his powerful presence and kingdom, with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, with holiness and happiness. There will be full opportunity in this time to show and demonstrate, from fact and abundant experience, what is the nature, beauty, and excellence of Christianity; that it is exactly suited to form the world into a state of love, union, and happiness; and that all the preceding evils among mankind have been chiefly owing to ignorance or neglect of Christ and the true spirit of Christianity, and opposition to those in life or heart, or both. And this will be time enough to show that all means are ineffectual to reclaim man from sin; and that this can be effected by nothing but the Spirit of God, poured down in plentiful effusions; and to give a sample and foretaste of the beauty, happiness, and glory of the holy society and redeemed church in heaven.

And in this thousand years the work of redemption and salvation may be fully accomplished in the utmost extent and glory of it. In this time, in which the world will be soon filled with real Christians, and continue full, by constant propagation, to supply the place of those who will leave the world, there will be many thousands born and live on earth to each one that had been born and lived in the preceding six thousand years. So that if they who shall be born in that thousand years shall be all, or most of them, saved, as they will be, there will, on the whole, be many thousands of mankind saved to one that shall be lost.*

The only end that can be imagined would be answered by protracting this time of the prosperity of the church in this world is, that greater numbers of mankind might exist and be saved. But that this is really desirable or best, all things considered, there is not the least evidence. A desire that more of mankind should be saved than will be saved in a thousand years of the prevalence of holiness and salvation in all the families of the earth never could be satisfied; for, though three hundred and sixty thousand years should be added, and all should be saved who lived in that time, still, for the same

* See Bellamy's Sermon on the Millennium.

reason that this is desired, it will be equally desirable, and more so, that the time of salvation should be lengthened out yet longer, and so on without end. This reason for making the time longer, that more may be saved, cannot cease; and a desire of more time on this ground, or for this reason, is like the four things which Solomon mentions as never satisfied, and say not, It is enough. It is most wise and best, that a certain number and proportion of mankind should be saved. And God only knows what this number is, how great, and what proportion it bears to the whole human race. And no man has any reason to think that this number will not be completed within a literal thousand years, after the millennium commences. Nor can there be the least evidence from any quarter that it will not, unless there be evidence that the millennium contains a longer time; which is the question under consideration. And it is supposed that no evidence of this has yet been produced, or can be at present. And it is certain that the salvation of more of mankind, were the time to be longer, is no reason why it should be longer. But this will be best, and most infallibly decided by the event which will take place in due season; which, perhaps, cannot be determined with certainty now, or so that all shall be satisfied and agreed in the matter. And it may not be wise to be very confident on either side of the question.

The evidence has now been produced from Scripture, that there is a time coming, in which the cause of Christ shall prevail in this world, and his kingdom spread and fill the earth, as it has never yet done; in which time the church and people of Christ shall come to a state of peace and prosperity; when the kingdom of Satan shall be utterly destroyed, and all wicked men shall be put down, and cast out of the earth, and there shall be none to destroy, hurt, or oppose the truth and ways of Christ or his people; and this happy, glorious day shall last a thousand years.

This is foretold, not by one single prophecy, but is repeatedly and abundantly mentioned in the sacred, prophetic writings, and represented by a variety of strong expressions, and by different similitudes, and in figurative language; and yet all perfectly agree to point out the same thing. And there are many prophecies of the same event by Isaiah, and in other parts of the Bible, which have not been particularly mentioned.

Nothing has yet taken place in favor of the church of Christ, and in opposition to his enemies, which is in any measure answerable to these predictions. By far the greater part of mankind have been in a state of ignorance of Christi-

anity, or of opposition to it, ever since the gospel has been preached to men; and Satan has had a greater and stronger kingdom on earth than Christ, most of the time since his ascension. And sin and real opposition of Christ, in principle and practice, have abounded in every age, even among nominal Christians. The overthrow of the Jews by the Romans, and the consequent spread of Christianity among the Gentiles, were events favorable to the church of Christ, and were a pledge and type of what he will yet do, in overthrowing his enemies and delivering his church in the latter days. And so was the overthrow of heathen Rome, and the spread and prevalence of Christianity through all the Roman empire, in the days of the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century. But this was of short continuance, and within twenty years the church fell into a state of great calamity by divisions, contentions, and heresies, and the empire was involved in confusion and war; and from that time to this the church has been in a low, afflicted state. The many promises made to Israel by the prophets, of restoration to a long, abiding state of obedience, holiness, and prosperity, have not been in any measure fulfilled to that nation, nor to the church, including Jews and Gentiles, represented and typified by Israel, Jerusalem, Mount Zion, etc. If such a day of prosperity of the church of Christ, comprehending Jews and Gentiles, and all nations, were not yet to come, great part of the prophecies in the Bible could have but a very low and little meaning, and would be in a great measure, if not wholly, useless; whereas, if they be understood according to the most natural, plain import of them, they open a most pleasing, wonderful scene, suited to support and animate the Christian, and fill him with gratitude and joy on the agreeable prospect.

It appears reasonable and desirable that Jesus Christ, who suffered shame and reproach in this world, and was condemned and put to death as a malefactor by men, should have this reproach wiped off in the sight of all men, and that the cause in which he suffered and died should prevail and be victorious in this same world, where he suffered and died; that he should, agreeably to ancient prophecies, be here on earth, "exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at him, (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,) so shall he sprinkle many nations, and kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul

unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. lii. 13–15; liii. 11, 12.)

And it appears very desirable that the enemies of Christ and his church should meet with disappointment, be defeated and confounded in this world, and that the reproach which has been cast upon the church should be removed; — that the church should put on her beautiful garments, and shine in the true beauties of Christianity; — that it should be seen from experiment in this world what Christianity is when acted out according to the true nature and spirit of it, and that this, and this only, can render men and society happy in this state. All this is, therefore, predicted and promised. "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame; for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth." (Zeph. iii. 19, 20.)

One reason why this day of salvation is delayed so long after the death and resurrection of Christ doubtless is, that there may be proper and full opportunity to discover the depravity and wickedness of man, and the insufficiency of all means that can be used, or methods taken, to bring men to repentance and a cordial submission to Christ, unless accompanied by the special, omnipotent influences of the Holy Spirit to renew their hearts, and clearly to manifest the natural enmity in the hearts of mankind against Christ and the truths of the gospel, and their strong disposition, and unconquerable, by all possible external means and advantages to oppose and pervert the gospel, and abuse it to the worst purposes; that it may appear in the most clear and striking light how greatly and wholly depraved and utterly lost men are, unless they be saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and that the whole praise and glory of the salvation of every one may be ascribed to the sovereign grace of Christ, and man be forever abased. When God has sufficiently tried men, and used a variety of the most proper and powerful means to bring the world to repentance, and all has proved in vain, he will then pour out his Spirit upon all, and renew their hearts, and converts will spring up as grass after showers of rain; and the obstinacy of man, and the power and sovereign grace of Christ, will be acknowledged by all, and that men are saved not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. (Zech. iv. 6. Rom. xi. 32. 1 Cor. i. 21.)

And it appears proper and wise that this day of prosperity and salvation should be in the latter end of the world, in the last times, as this is suited to excite and support the faith and

patience of Christians who live in the preceding dark and evil times, and to encourage and animate them to faithfulness and constancy in following Christ, and adherence to his cause in the midst of temptations and trials; and this use is made of it in the Scripture, especially in the Book of Revelation. And this is suited to excite the prayers of Christians, in all the preceding ages of darkness, affliction, and suffering, and the prevalence of sin and Satan, for the coming and kingdom of Christ, which he has prescribed as the first and most important petition in the pattern of prayer which he has given. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. *Thy kingdom come.* Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Daniel was excited and encouraged to fast and pray for the deliverance of the people of God from their affliction and distress in their captivity, by finding that this was foretold and promised by Jeremiah the prophet. (Dan. ix. 2–4.) And this has actually excited Christians to pray for this event in all ages of the church; and doubtless they will be awakened and stirred up to pray more generally, constantly, and fervently for this important, glorious event, as the approach of it is found by prophecy to be nearer. And it will be introduced in answer to the prayers of thousands and millions who have been, and who will yet be, crying to God night and day, resolving not to keep silence, or give him any rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa. lxii. 6, 7.) For he will be inquired of for this by his church and people to do it for them. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.)

SECTION II.

In which it is considered in what the Millennium will consist, and what will be the peculiar Happiness and Glory of that Day, according to Scripture.

There have been, and still are, very different opinions respecting the millennium, and the events which will take place in that day, which are grounded chiefly on the first six verses in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, which passage has been brought into view in the preceding section, but is to be more particularly considered in this.

Some have supposed that this passage is to be taken literally, as importing that at that time Jesus Christ will come in his human nature from heaven to earth, and set his kingdom up here, and reign visibly and personally, and with distinguished glory on earth, and that the bodies of the martyrs and other

eminent Christians will then be raised from the dead, in which they shall live and reign with Christ here on earth a thousand years; and some suppose that all the saints, the true friends to God and Christ, who have lived before that time, will then be raised from the dead, and live on earth perfectly holy during this thousand years, and this they suppose is meant by the first resurrection. Those who agree in general in this notion of the millennium, differ with respect to many circumstances, which it is needless to mention here.

Others have understood this paragraph of Scripture in a figurative sense; — that by this reign of Christ on earth is not meant his coming from heaven to earth in his human, visible nature, but his taking to himself his power, and utterly overthrowing the kingdom of Satan, and setting up his own kingdom in all the world, which before this had been confined to very narrow bounds, and subduing all hearts to a willing subjection, and thus reigning over all men who shall then be in the world, and live in that thousand years. And by "the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," living again and reigning with Christ a thousand years, they suppose is not meant a literal resurrection, or the resurrection of their bodies, — which is not asserted here, as there is nothing said of their bodies, or of their being raised to life, — but that they shall live again and reign with Christ in the revival, prosperity, reign, and triumph of that cause and interest in which they lived, and for the promotion of which they died, and in whose death the cause seemed, in a measure and for a time, to die and be lost. And they shall live again in their successors, who shall arise and stand up with the same spirit, and in the same cause, in which they lived and died, and fill the world and reign with Christ a thousand years, agreeably to ancient prophecies. "The meek shall inherit the earth. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the people of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve him." And they suppose that this revival of the truths and cause of Christ, by the numerous inhabitants of the earth rising up to a new and holy life, and filling the world with holiness and happiness, is that which is here called the *first resurrection*, in distinction from the second, which will consist in the resurrection of the body; whereas this is a spiritual resurrection, — a resurrection of the truths and cause of Christ, which had been, in a great degree, dead and lost, — and a

resurrection of the souls of men, by the renovation of the Holy Ghost.

That this important passage of Scripture is to be understood in the figurative sense, last mentioned, is very probable, if not certain. And the following considerations are thought sufficient to support it: —

1. Most, if not all, the prophecies in this book, are delivered in figurative language, referring to types and events recorded in the Old Testament, and in imitation of the language of the ancient prophets. And this was proper and even necessary in the best manner to answer the ends of propheey, as might easily be shown, were it necessary. The first part of this passage, all must allow, is figurative. Satan cannot be bound with a literal, material chain. The key, the great chain, and the seal, cannot be understood literally. The whole is a figure, and can mean no more than that when the time of the millennium arrives, or rather, previous to it, Jesus Christ will lay effectual restraints on Satan, so that his powerful and prevailing influence, by which he has before deceived and destroyed a great part of mankind, shall be wholly taken from him for a thousand years. And it is most natural to understand the other part of the description of this remarkable event to be represented in the same figurative language, as the whole is a representation of one scene; especially, since no reason can be given why it should not be understood so. And there are reasons against taking it in a literal sense, which will be mentioned in the following particulars: —

2. To suppose that Christ shall come in his human nature to this earth, and live here in his whole person visibly a thousand years, before the day of judgment, appears to be contrary to several passages of Scripture.

The coming of Christ, and his appearing at the day of judgment in his human nature, is said to be his *second* appearance, answering to his *first* appearance in his human nature on earth, from his birth to his ascension into heaven, which was past. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them who look for him shall he appear the *second time*, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) The appearance here spoken of is the appearance of Christ at the day of judgment, to complete the salvation of his church. This could not be his appearing the second time, were he thus to appear and be bodily present in his human nature on earth, in the time of the millennium, which is to take place before the day of judgment. The coming of Christ does not always intend his coming visibly

in his human nature; but he is said to come, when he destroyed the temple and nation of the Jews, and appeared in favor of his church. So his destruction of heathen Rome, and delivering his church from that persecuting power, was an instance of his coming. And he will, in the same way, come to destroy antichrist, and the kingdom of Satan in the world, and introduce the millennium; and in these instances, and others, he may be said to appear. But his coming to judgment, and appearing to complete the final destruction of all his enemies, and to perfect the salvation of his church, is his last coming and appearance. And though this will not be his second appearance and coming, in the sense now mentioned, and with reference to those instances of his coming; yet, as he will then come and appear visibly in his human nature, this will be his second coming and appearance in this way and manner, having never appeared on earth in his human nature more than once before, or since his first ascension to heaven, after his incarnation. Therefore, when the final judgment shall take place, Christ is represented as being revealed and coming from heaven, and this is often called, by way of eminence, his *appearing;* meaning his appearing and coming from heaven in visible splendor and glory, in his whole person, in both natures, divine and human. But if he were here on earth, visible in his human nature, and reigning in his glorified body, during the millennium, he would be already here to attend the last judgment, and he could not be properly said to come from heaven, and to be revealed from heaven, because this was done a thousand years before. Therefore that Christ should come from heaven, and appear and reign in his human nature and presence before the day of judgment, seems to be contrary to the following Scriptures: "For the Lord himself shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. When the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed from heaven*, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God," etc. "When he *shall come* to be glorified in his saints." (1 Thess. iv. 16. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 10.) This is evidently his appearing the second time for the salvation of all them that look for him; but were he on earth before this, in the human nature, during the time of the millennium, how could he be said to be *revealed*, to *descend*, and come *from* heaven to judge the world?

3. As it seems to be contrary to the above-mentioned Scriptures to suppose that Christ will appear on earth, and reign a thousand years in his human nature, so it appears

contrary to all reason. Jesus Christ is now on the throne of the universe, having all power in heaven and earth given to him as God-man and Redeemer, being made head over all things to the church. He is in the most proper, agreeable, and convenient situation to govern the world, and take care of his church. It does not appear agreeable to his station and office, as king and head over all things, for him to descend in the human nature, and erect a throne on earth, which, so far as can be conceived, would be no advantage to his person, design, and work, but very much to the contrary. He is gone to heaven in the human nature, that he might reign there till his enemies are made his footstool, and all things shall be subdued under him. And his church on earth will enjoy him to as great a degree, and as much advantage, as if he were personally on earth in the human nature, and more, and will have as great enjoyment of his presence. He is now in the best situation to be adored and worshipped by his church on earth. Though they do not now see him, yet, believing and loving him, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and it would not tend to increase this faith, love, and joy, to have him come from heaven, and live in some place on earth in his human nature, but the contrary; for but few, compared with the whole inhabitants of the world, could have access to him, or see him more than they now do. And when the human nature is in heaven, all may equally have access to him, love and worship him. His church and kingdom on earth will be as happy, splendid, and glorious as if he were on earth as he is now in heaven, and much more so; for these will consist in his spiritual presence and influence, which may be as great while his human nature is in heaven, as if it were on earth; and in their holy conformity to Christ, which would not be increased by his being in that sense on earth. It hence appears in no respect advantageous or desirable, but the contrary, that Jesus Christ should come personally in the human nature from heaven to earth to reign here with his church, or that he should thus appear, till he shall come to judgment. It is, therefore, unreasonable to expect or suppose he will thus come, unless it were expressly asserted in Scripture, which it certainly is not; but there are some, if not many, passages which seem to be inconsistent with it.

It may be proper to observe here that the question respecting the manner in which Christ will reign on earth in the millennium has no concern with the question concerning the literal or figurative meaning of this passage, as the former does not depend upon the latter; for no man will suppose that

Christ's reigning on earth is to be understood in a figurative sense. If he shall reign on earth in the hearts of men by their voluntary subjection to him, he will reign as literally as if he were present on earth in his humanity. The question whether this passage is to be understood literally or figuratively, respects the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, etc., their living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. This, therefore, leads to other observations.

4. The apostle Paul in his writings does not appear to expect to have his body raised from the dead to live here on earth again after he died, or say any thing to lead the Christians of this day to expect any such thing, but the contrary.

He says, "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment," and leads Christians to look forward to the second coming of Christ, when he will come to judgment, as the next great event that will immediately respect them, which seems to be inconsistent with the saints' having their bodies raised, and living in this world again, a thousand years before the day of judgment. He addresses Christians in the following words: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 1–4.) He directs them to expect and seek enjoyment in heaven where Christ is, and not to expect that he will leave his throne there, till he shall appear the second time to receive his saints to glory in heaven; for appearing with Christ in glory means appearing with him in heaven, as that is the place of glory where the redeemed are brought to be glorified — to be where Christ is, to behold his glory. The apostle Peter, speaking of the dissolution of the heavens and earth, says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. iii. 13.) Some have supposed that this is the millennial state, which shall take place after the general conflagration, by which the earth will be renewed — in which a perfectly holy and happy state shall commence, to which all the saints who had died shall be raised, etc. But such a notion cannot be reconciled to other passages of Scripture, in which, as has been observed, the millennium is represented as taking place before the general conflagration and the day of judgment. And after these are over, and the wicked are cast into endless punishment, (Rev. 20,) the apostle John says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were

passed away, and there was no more sea." (Chap. xxi. 1.) By which the heavenly state is chiefly if not wholly meant, where redemption and the church will be perfected. By the new heaven and new earth is meant the work of redemption, or the church redeemed by Christ. This is the new creation, infinitely superior to the old creation, the natural world, and more important, excellent, and durable; of which the latter is a faint type or shadow.

The renovation of the hearts of men by the Spirit of God, by which they become true Christians, is in Scripture called a new creature, or as the original words καινὴ κτίσις may as well be rendered, *a new creation.* "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. vi. 15.) Therefore, every true member of the church belongs to the new creation, and is part of it; and this new creation of the new heaven and new earth goes on and makes advances as the church is enlarged and rises to a state of greater prosperity, and proceeds towards perfection.

The new heavens and new earth, the redeemed church of Christ, will be brought to a very happy and glorious state in the millennium, and greater advantages will be made then in this new creation than were ever made before. Therefore, to this event the following prophecy of Isaiah does chiefly refer, if not wholly: "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth. And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (Isa. lv. 17, 18.) It appears from the preceding and following context, that this prophecy refers to the millennium, in which the new creation, the church of Christ, will come to the most perfect and happy state to which it will be brought in this world; from which it will pass to a perfect state, and be completely finished, after the general resurrection and judgment. Then the old creation, the heavens and the earth, shall pass away, and be burnt up, and the new creation shall be finished and brought to a most perfect, beautiful, happy, and glorious state. To the new heaven and new earth, thus completed, wherein that righteousness or true holiness, which is the beauty, happiness, and glory of the new creation, will *dwell*, i. e., continue and flourish forever, the apostles Peter and John have chief reference in their words, which have been transcribed above.

5. It does not appear desirable, or to be any advantage to

the departed saints, or to the church of Christ on earth, to have the bodies of all who have died before the millennium raised from their graves, and come to live a thousand years in this world before the general resurrection. They are now perfectly holy and happy; and so far as can be conceived, it would be no addition, but a diminution to their happiness, to come and live in this world in the body, to eat and drink, and partake of the enjoyments of the world. This would be a degradation which on no account can be desirable to the spirits of the just, now made perfect in heaven; and it would be no advance in the work of redemption, which is then to be carried on in a greater degree than ever before. Nor would this be any advantage to the church in that happy state to which it will then be brought; but the contrary, as they would take up that room in the world which will be then wanted for those who will be born in that day; and the spirits of the just could not know or enjoy so much of the prosperity and happiness of the church in the salvation of men, were they to live in bodies on earth in that time. The inhabitants of heaven have a more particular and extensive knowledge of what takes place in favor of the church on earth than any in this world have, or than they could have, were they to come and live here. They know of every conversion that takes place in this world, and they must have the knowledge of the state of the church on earth and of every event which comes to pass in favor of it, and see the whole of its prosperity; and they have great joy in every thing of this kind: "there is joy in heaven, in presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." How greatly will the happiness and joy in heaven be increased, when all the inhabitants of the world shall be converted to Christ, and the church of Christ shall fill the earth, and appear in the beauty of holiness! Agreeably to this, the inhabitants of heaven are represented as greatly rejoicing in the prosperity of the church on earth, and the overthrow of all her enemies. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her. And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God; for he hath judged the great whore, etc. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1–7.) Surely none will desire to leave that place of knowledge, light and joy, and come and be confined in the body in this world, which will be darkness and solitary, compared with that; such a change of place could be no privilege or reward, but rather a calamity.

Therefore, it is not to be believed, unless it be plainly, and in express words, revealed; which, it is presumed, it is not. This leads to another observation.

6. There is nothing expressly said of the resurrection of the body in this passage. The apostle John saw the *souls* of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, etc., and they lived and reigned with Christ. The resurrection of the body is nowhere expressed in Scripture by the soul's living; and as there is nothing said of the body, and he only saw their souls to live, this does not appear to be a proper expression to denote the resurrection of the body, and their living in that. This, therefore, does not seem to be the natural meaning of the words, and certainly is not the *necessary* meaning; we are, therefore, warranted to look for another meaning, and to acquiesce in it, if one can be found, which is more easy and natural, and more agreeable to the whole passage and to the Scripture in general. Therefore, —

7. The most easy and probable meaning is, that the souls of the martyrs and all the faithful followers of Christ who have lived in the world, and have died before the millennium shall commence, shall revive and live again in their successors, who shall rise up in the same spirit and in the same character in which they lived and died, and in the revival and flourishing of that cause which they espoused and spent their lives in promoting, which cause shall appear to be almost lost and dead previous to the introduction of that glorious day. This is, therefore, a spiritual resurrection, by which all the inhabitants of the world will be made spiritually alive where spiritual death before had reigned; and they shall appear in the spirit and power of those martyrs and holy men who had before lived in the world and who shall live again in these their successors, and in the revival of their cause, and in the resurrection of the church from the very low state in which it had been before the millennium to a state of great prosperity and glory.

This is agreeable to the way of representing things in Scripture in other instances. John the Baptist was Elijah, because he rose in the spirit of Elijah, and promoted the same cause in which Elijah lived and died, and Elijah revived and lived in John the Baptist because he went before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah. (Luke i. 17.) Therefore, Christ says of John, "This is Elijah who was to come." (Matt. xi. 14.)

It is also to be observed, that the revival and restoration of the church to a state of prosperity, from a dark, low state, is represented by a resurrection to life, or as life from the dead.

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." (Isa. xxvi. 19.) In the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, this is represented by bringing dry bones to life, and from them raising up a very great army. This is a metaphorical or figurative resurrection. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." The apostle Paul, speaking of the conversion of the Jews to Christ at the millennium, says it shall be as "life from the dead." (Rom. xi. 15.)

In the millennium, there will be a spiritual resurrection, a resurrection of the souls of the whole church on earth and in heaven. All nations will be converted, and the world will be filled with spiritual life, as it never was before; and this will be a general resurrection of the souls of men. This was represented in the returning prodigal. The father says, "This my son was dead, and is alive." And the apostle Paul speaks of Christians as raised from the dead to life. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." (Eph. ii. 4, 5.) "If ye then be *risen* with Christ." (Col. iii. 1.) And this will be a most remarkable resurrection of the church on earth, from a low, dark, afflicted state, to a state of great life and joy. It will be multiplied to an exceeding great army, which will cover the face of the earth. And heaven will, in a sense and degree, come down to earth; the spirit of the martyrs, and of all the just made perfect, will now revive and appear on earth, in their numerous successors, and the joy of those in heaven will be greatly increased.

This is the first resurrection, in which all they who have a part are blessed and holy. "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power." It is implied that *they only* are blessed and holy who share in this resurrection; and, therefore, that all the redeemed in heaven and earth, who are blessed and holy, are the subjects of it, or have part in it. All who have been or shall be raised from death to spiritual life, have by this a part in this first resurrection; and they, and they only, shall escape the second death. This is a further evidence that this first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection, a resurrection of the

soul; for, if it were a literal resurrection of the body, no one would think it would include all the happy and holy, all that shall be saved.

The second resurrection is to be the resurrection of the body, in which all shall have part, both the holy and the unholy, the blessed and the miserable, which is to take place after the first resurrection is over and the millennium is ended, and after the rise and destruction of Gog and Magog, when the day of judgment shall come on, of which there is an account in the latter part of this chapter. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The *rest of the dead* are all the dead which have no part in the first resurrection; that is, are not holy, and partakers of spiritual life. This includes all the wicked who shall have lived and shall die before the millennium, the last of which will be slain, and swept off the earth previous to the millennium, and in order to introduce it, of which there is a representation in the words immediately preceding the passage under consideration. "And *the rest* were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." In our translation, it is *the remnant*. It is the same word in the original, οἱ λοιποὶ, which is translated *the rest*, in the words transcribed above, and the latter seem to have reference to the former. The rest of the dead are the wicked dead, in opposition to the righteous, who lived again in their successors, who take possession of the earth and reign, and in the revival and prosperity of their cause, and the kingdom of which they are members. During this thousand years, the rest of the dead, all the anti-Christian party, and the wicked enemies of Christ, who lived and died in the cause of Satan, do not live again; they will have no successors on earth who shall rise in their spirit, and espouse and promote their cause; but this will be wholly run down and lost, till the thousand years shall be ended; and then they shall live again a short time in their successors, Gog and Magog, who shall arise in their spirit and cause, and increase and prevail, while Satan is loosed again for a little season. This is implied in the words, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." It is supposed that they will live again then, which must be during the time in which Satan shall be loosed; for the general resurrection of the bodies will not be till this is ended. These dead will live, then, just

as the souls of the martyrs, and all the faithful followers of Christ who had died, will live in the millennium.*

That this prophecy respects all nations, and the whole of mankind who shall live in the world in that thousand years, is evident, in that the binding of Satan respects them all. "That he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." And this answers to a prophecy in Isaiah. "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the vail that is spread over *all nations*." (Isaiah xxv. 7.) All nations, the world of mankind, therefore, who shall then live on the earth, will have part in the first resurrection; and this warrants the application of all the prophecies which have been mentioned in the preceding section, and others of the same tenor, to this time. And there is good reason to believe that this prophecy in the first six verses of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation is expressed in language best suited to answer the end of it, if it be understood as it has been now explained. The meaning is as obvious and plain as is desirable and proper that of prophecy should be, when compared with other prophecies. And it is in the best manner suited to support and comfort the followers of Christ, who live before that time, and to animate them to faithfulness, constancy and patience, under all their sufferings in this cause, while the wicked prosper and triumph, and Satan reigns in the world, which is one special end of this revelation. Here they are taught that an end is to come to the afflictions of the church and to the triumph of all her enemies; that Satan's kingdom on earth shall come to an end, and the church shall rise and spread, and fill the world; that the cause in which they labor and suffer shall be victorious, and that all who suffer in this cause, and who are faithful to Christ, shall live to see this happy, glorious day, and have a large share in it, in proportion to the degree and length of their sufferings, labors, and persevering patience and fidelity in the cause of Christ and his church.

The way is now prepared to consider and show more particularly in what the happiness and glory of the millennium will consist, and what particular circumstances will attend

* "It is very agreeable to the design and connection of this prophecy to understand the rest of the dead, who lived not again till the thousand years were finished, of the rest or remnant, viz., of those who were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse. Thus the dead church, raised to life, and living and reigning for a thousand years, and the enemies of the church remaining dead, and not living again till the thousand years were finished, will exactly agree in the same figurative meaning. This will be a sense consistent with the resurrection of the anti-Christian party again, for a little season, after the thousand eyars shall be finished. *Lowman's note on* Rev. xx. 5.

the church at that day; what is revealed concerning this by express prophecies, and what is implied in them, or may be deduced as consequences from what is expressly declared. It will be no wonder if some mistakes should be made on this point; but it is hoped if there should be any, they will not be very hurtful. And it is apprehended that the greatest error will be in falling short, and not coming up to the reality, in the description of the happiness and glory of that day; for doubtless our ideas of these, when raised to the highest of which we are at present capable, fall vastly short of the truth. There is good reason to conclude, however, that the church and Christians will not be perfectly holy in that day, but that every one will be attended with a degree of sinful imperfection, while in the body, however great may be his attainments and advantages in knowledge and holiness. Doubtless the inspired declarations, that "there is no man which sinneth not; there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not; that if any who professes to be a Christian say he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him," will remain true to the end of the world, even in the millennium, and there will be no perfection on this side heaven. The apostasy which will take place at the end of the millennium can be better accounted for, on the supposition that the saints will not be perfect in that time, and seems to suppose it. Though they may, and doubtless will, have vastly higher degrees of light and holiness than any shall have before that time, yet they will be far from being wholly without sin.

It is most probable, that every individual person who shall then live will be a real Christian, and all will doubtless be members of the church in that day. That is the time when "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest." God says to his church, speaking of that day, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." (Isa. lx. 21.) "Awake, awake: put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." (Isa. lii. 1.)

The following things will take place in the millennium in an eminent degree, as they never did before, which may be mentioned as generals, including many particulars, some of which will be afterwards suggested.

I. That will be a time of eminent holiness, when it shall be acted out by all in a high degree, in all the branches of it, so as to appear in its true beauty and the happy effects of it. This will be the peculiar glory and the source of the happiness of the millennium. The prophet Zechariah, speaking of

that day, says, "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots of the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." (Zech. xiv. 20, 21.) In these metaphorical expressions is declared the eminent degree of holiness of that day, which will consecrate every thing, even all the utensils and the common business and enjoyments of life unto the Lord.

Holiness consists in love to God and to man, with every affection and exercise implied in this, which being expressed and acted out, appears in the exercise of piety towards God, in every branch of it, and of righteousness and goodness, or disinterested benevolence towards man, including ourselves. This, so far as it shall take place, will banish all the evils which have existed and prevailed in the world, and becoming universal, and rising to a high and eminent degree, will introduce a state of enjoyment and happiness which never was known before on earth, and render it a resemblance of heaven in a high degree.

This will be effected by the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, poured down on men more universally, and in more constant and plentiful effusions than ever before; for all holiness in man is the effect of the Holy Spirit. That day will be, in a peculiar sense, *the dispensation of the Holy Spirit*, when he will appear as the author of all holiness, by whose influence alone divine, revealed truth, and all religious institutions and means, become efficacious and salutary; by which he will have peculiar honor in the holiness and salvation which shall then take place. The prophecies of Scripture which respect the millennium represent it in this light. God, speaking by Isaiah of that time, says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses." And the same time and event is mentioned as the effect of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the church. "Neither will I hide my face any more from them; *for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel*, saith the Lord God." (Eze. xxxix. 29.) The same event is predicted by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids in these days, will I pour out my Spirit." (Joel ii. 28, 29.) The apostle Peter applies this passage in Joel to the pouring out of the Spirit on the apostles and others on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 16, etc.) But this prophecy was fulfilled only in a

small degree then. This was but the beginning, the first fruits, which will issue in that which is unspeakably greater, more extensive and glorious, in the days of the millennium, to which this prediction has chief respect, and when it will have the full and most complete accomplishment.

II. There will be a great increase of light and knowledge to a degree vastly beyond what has been before. This is indeed implied in the great degree of holiness which has been mentioned; for knowledge, mental light, and holiness are inseparably connected, and are, in some respects, the same. Holiness is true light and discerning, so far as it depends upon a right taste, and consists in it, and it is a thirst after every kind and degree of useful knowledge; and this desire and thirst for knowledge will be great and strong, in proportion to the degree of holiness exercised, and forms the mind to constant attention, and to make swift advances in understanding and knowledge, and becomes a strong guard against mistakes, error, and delusion. Therefore, a time of eminent holiness must be a time of proportionably great light and knowledge. This is the representation which the Scripture gives of that time. The end of binding Satan, and casting him into the bottomless pit, is said to be, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." This will put an end to the darkness and multiplicity of strong delusions which do prevail, and will prevail, till that time, by which Satan supports and promotes his interest and kingdom among men. Then "the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail spread over all nations, shall be taken away and destroyed." (Isa. xxv. 7.) "And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly." (Isa. xxxii. 3, 4.) The superior light and knowledge of that day are metaphorically represented in the following words: "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." (Isa. xxx. 26.) In that day, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 9.)

The Holy Scriptures will then be attended to by all, and studied with care, meekness, humility, and uprightness of heart, earnestly desiring to understand them and know the truth, and the truths they contain will be received with a high relish and delight; and the Bible will be much better under-

stood than ever before. Many things expressed or implied in the Scripture, which are now overlooked and disregarded, will then be discovered and appear important and excellent; and those things which now appear intricate and unintelligible, will then appear plain and easy. Then public teachers will be eminently burning and shining lights; apt to teach; scribes well instructed into the things of the kingdom of heaven, who will bring out of their treasures things new and old; and the hearers will be all attention, and receive the truth in the love of it, into honest and good hearts, and light and knowledge will constantly increase. The conversation of friends and neighbors, when they meet, will be full of instruction, and they will assist each other in their inquiries after the truth, and in pursuit of knowledge. Parents will be able and disposed to instruct their children as soon as they are capable of learning; and they will early understand what are the great and leading truths which are revealed in the Bible, and the duties and institutions there prescribed; and from their childhood they will know and understand the Holy Scriptures, by which they will grow in understanding and wisdom, and will soon know more than the greatest and best divines have known in ages before; and a happy foundation will be laid for great advances in knowledge and usefulness to the end of life. Agreeably to this, the Scripture, speaking of that day, says, "There shall be no more thence (i. e., in the church) an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old." (Isa. lxv. 20.) "An infant of days" is an *old infant;* that is, an old man who is an infant in knowledge, understanding, and discretion. Many such aged infants have been and still are to be found. In that day, all shall make advances in true knowledge, discretion and wisdom, in some proportion to their years. "Nor an old man that hath not filled his days;" that is, an old man who has not improved in knowledge and usefulness, and every good attainment, according to his age. "For a child shall die a hundred years old;" that is, children in years shall then make such early progress in knowledge and in religion, and in all excellent and useful attainments, that they shall equal, if not surpass, the highest attainments in these things of the oldest men who have lived in former ages.

They will then have every desirable advantage and opportunity to get knowledge. They will all be engaged in the same pursuit, and give all the aid and assistance to each other in their power. They will all have sufficient leisure to pursue and acquire learning of every kind, that will be beneficial to themselves and to society, especially knowledge of divinity; and great

advances will be made in all arts and sciences, and in every useful branch of knowledge, which tends to promote the spiritual and eternal good of men, or their convenience and comfort in this life.

III. It will be a time of universal peace, love, and general and cordial friendship. War and all strife and contention shall then cease, and be succeeded by mutual love, friendship, and beneficence. Those lusts of men which originate in self-love, or selfishness, which produce all the wars and strifes among men, shall be subdued and mortified, and yield to that disinterested benevolence, that heavenly wisdom, which is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated. This will effectually put an end to war, as the Scripture teaches. "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." (Isa. ii. 4; xxxii. 18.) The whole world of mankind will be united as one family, wisely seeking the good of each other, in the exercise of the most sweet love and friendship, founded upon the best and everlasting principles. "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." This change, which shall then take place, in which men, who were in ages before like savage beasts, injurious, cruel, revengeful, and destructive to each other, shall lay aside all this, and become harmless, humble, and benevolent, is set in a striking, beautiful light in prophecies, representing it by the most fierce and cruel beasts of prey changing their nature, and living quietly with those creatures which they used to destroy, and so tame and pliable that a little child might lead them; and by the most venomous creatures and insects becoming harmless, so that a child might play with them without any danger of being hurt. Isaiah, speaking of that day, says, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall 'play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den." (Isa. xi. 6–8.) Then "they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." (Mic. iv. 4.)

IV. In that day men will not only be united in peace and

love, as brethren, but will agree in sentiments respecting the doctrines and truth contained in the Bible, and the religious institutions and practice which are there prescribed.

Professing Christians have been, from the beginning of Christianity to this day, greatly divided, and have opposed each other in their religious sentiments and practices, and are now divided into various parties, sects, and denominations, while all appeal to divine revelation, and profess to take their sentiments and practices from that.

It has been often said by some professing Christians, and is a sentiment which appears to be spreading at this day, that difference in religious sentiments, and in attendance on the institutions of the gospel and modes of worship, is attended with no inconvenience, but is rather desirable and advantageous; and by this variety, Christianity is rendered more agreeable and beautiful; that it is impossible that all men, whose capacities and genius are so different and various, and their minds and way of thinking and conception are naturally so far from being alike, should ever be brought to think alike, and embrace the same religious sentiments; that this difference in man's belief and sentiment cannot be criminal; for men are no more obliged to think alike than they are to look alike, and have the same bodily features and stature. All the union that is required, or that can take place, is that of kind affection, love, and charity.

But such sentiments as these are not agreeable to reason or Scripture. Error in judgment and sentiment, especially in things of a moral nature, is always wrong, and does not consist or originate merely in any defect of the natural faculties of the mind, but is of a moral nature, in which the taste, affection, or inclination of the heart is concerned, and therefore is always, in every degree of it, morally wrong, and more or less criminal. Were the moral faculties of the mind, were the heart perfectly right, man would not be capable of error, or of judging wrong, or making any mistake, especially in things of religion. The natural faculties of the mind, of perception and understanding or reason, considered as separate from the inclination or will, do not lead, and have no tendency in themselves to judge wrong, or contrary to the truth of things. To do so, is to judge without evidence, and contrary to it, which the mind never would or could do, were not the inclination or heart concerned in it so as to have influence, which must be a wrong inclination, and contrary to the truth and to evidence, and, therefore, is morally wrong or criminal.

Therefore, all the mistakes and wrong opinions which men entertain respecting the doctrines, institutions, and duties

revealed in the Bible are criminal, and of a bad tendency. They must be so, as they are contrary to man's obligation and duty to believe all revealed truth, and are wholly owing to a wrong bias or inclination, or the depravity or corruption of the heart. What God has revealed in his Word, he has declared to man, to be received by him and believed to be the truth, of which he has given sufficient evidence; and the man who does not believe what God has clearly revealed, and of which he has given sufficient evidence, even all that can be reasonably desired, does abuse and pervert his own understanding, and shuts his eyes against the truth, and refuses to receive the testimony which God has given. And who will say there is no crime in this?

Since, therefore, all mistakes and errors, contrary to the truths made known in the Bible, are criminal and owing to the corruption of the heart of man, then perfect holiness will exclude all error, and there neither is, nor can be, any wrong judgment in heaven; and in the millennium, which will be a greater image of heaven than ever was before on earth, holiness, light, and knowledge will rise so high that the former errors in principle and practice will subside, and there will be a great and general union in the belief and practice of the truth contained in divine revelation.

As there is but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," so in that day men will be united in the belief and profession of this one faith, in the system of doctrines revealed in the Bible, which then will appear plain, and with the clearest evidence to all. And they will have one common Lord, will understand and obey all the commands of Christ, and they will know what are the institutions and ordinances which Christ has appointed, which are all implied in baptism; they will understand what is the import of this, and implied in it, and be united in sentiments and practice, so as to form a beautiful, happy union and harmony, which will put an end to the variety and opposition of opinions and practices which now divide professing Christians into so many sects, parties, and denominations. The whole church, with all the members of it, which fill the earth and include all mankind then living, will, in that day, come to that to which the gospel tends and is designed to bring it. It will "come in *the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that they shall be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love shall grow up into him in all things,

which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. iv. 13–15.) Then, agreeably to the wish and injunction of the apostle Paul, Christians will "all speak the same thing, and there will be no divisions among them, but will be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10.) Then the inventions and prescriptions of men, both in doctrines and modes of worship, and in Christian practice, will be abolished and cease. The Bible will be then understood, and be found a sufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice, in which all will agree, and will join, "with one mind, and one mouth, to worship and glorify God." (Rom. xv. 6.) Then the weapons of the gospel, the truths of divine revelation, being preached, understood, and received, will cast down the imaginations of men, and every high thing introduced by the pride of man, which now exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and will bring into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) All shall agree in their view and acknowledgment of the divine character, and consequently in all the revealed truths and duties contained in the Bible. Christ will then come to his temple, his church, "and he will be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 1–3.) The question will be asked now, as it was then, "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth?" What sect or denomination of Christians will abide the trial of that day, and be established?

Answer. Nothing but the truth, or that which is conformable to it, will abide the trial of that day. "The lip of truth shall be established forever." (Pr. xii. 19.) "The righteous nation which *keepeth the truth* shall enter in," and be established in that day. (Isa. xxvi. 2.) Those of every denomination will doubtless expect that the doctrines they hold, and their mode of worship and discipline and practice, with respect to the institutions and ordinances of Christ, will be then established as agreeable to the truth, and all others will be given up; and all men will freely conform to them. But the most, and perhaps all, will be much disappointed in this expectation, especially with regard to the different modes of worship, and practices relating to discipline, and the ordinances of the gospel. When the church comes to be built up in that day, and put on her beautiful garments, it will doubtless be different from any thing which now takes place; and

what church and particular denomination is now nearest the truth, and the church which will exist at that time, must be left to be decided by the event. It is certain, that all doctrines and practices which are not agreeable to the truth will at that day, as wood, hay, and stubble, be burnt up. Therefore, it now highly concerns all honestly to seek and find, love, and practise truth and peace.

It is agreeable to human nature, and seems to be essential to rational creatures, to be most pleased with those who think as they do, and are of the same sentiments with themselves, in those things in which they feel themselves chiefly interested and concerned. And this agreement in sentiment cements and increases their union and friendship. But this is true, in a peculiar sense and degree, in the case before us. There can be no proper, cordial, religious union among professing Christians, who wholly differ and oppose each other in their opinion respecting the truths and doctrines of the gospel. And agreement in sentiment, and in the knowledge and belief of the truth, is essential to the most happy Christian union and friendship. To him who loves the truth, error in others is disagreeable and hateful, and that in proportion to the degree of his love of the truth and pleasure in it. Therefore, Christians love one another *in the truth*, as the apostles and primitive Christians did. "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." (3 John, verse 1.) Where there is no agreement and union in sentiment and belief of the truth, there is no foundation for Christian love and friendship. Love, without any regard to truth, is not Christian love. In this sense, the knowledge and belief of the truth, and Christian love, cannot be separated; and where there is no knowledge and belief of the truths of the gospel, and agreement in sentiment, there can be no union of heart and true Christian love and friendship.*

As light and knowledge will be greatly increased in the millennium, and the great truths and doctrines contained in

* They who talk of Christian union, love and charity, where there is no agreement in sentiment, respecting the truths and doctrines of the gospel, but a great difference and opposition, and think that doctrinal sentiments are of no importance in Christianity, and that their having no belief of particular doctrines, and no creed, or differing in their religious sentiments ever so much is no impediment to the greatest union and Christian friendship, seem not to know what real Christian union, love, and friendship is. It is certain they do not love one another *in the truth*, and *for the truth's sake*, which dwelleth in them, as Christians did in the apostles' days. (2 John i. 2.) The catholicism and love for which they plead appears to be a *political* love and union, which may in some measure unite civil worldly societies, but has nothing of the nature of real Christianity and that union and love by which the followers of Christ are ONE.

divine revelation will then be more clearly discerned, and appear in their true connection, excellence and importance, they will be understood and cordially embraced by all; and they will be united together in the same mind, and the same judgment; and by this be formed to a high degree of happy Christian union, love and friendship, loving one another in the truth, with a pure heart fervently. Thus were the primitive Christians united in knowing and obeying the truth, whom the apostle Peter thus addresses: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in *obeying the truth* through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet. i. 22.) In that day the promise and prophecy spoken by Jeremiah will be accomplished to a greater extent and degree than it ever was before. "And I will give them one heart, and *one way*, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." (Jer. xxxii. 39.)

V. The millennium will be a time of great enjoyment, happiness, and universal joy.

This is often mentioned in prophecy, as what will take place in that day, in a peculiar manner and high degree. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Be ye glad, and rejoice forever in that which I create; for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (Isa. lv. 12; lxv. 18.) The enjoyments of that day are represented by a rich and plentiful feast for all people, consisting in provision of the most agreeable and delicious kind. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." (Isa. xxv. 6.) The enjoyments and happiness of the millennium are compared to a marriage supper. "Let us rejoice and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev. xix. 7, 9.) And there will be a great increase of happiness and joy in heaven at the introduction of that day, and during the continuance of it. (Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1–7.) "There shall be joy in heaven, and there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xv. 7, 10.)

And this great increase of happiness and joy on earth will be the natural, and even necessary, consequence of the great degree and universality of knowledge and holiness, which all will then possess. The knowledge of God and the Redeemer,

and love to him, will be the source of unspeakable pleasure and joy in his character, government, and kingdom. And the more the great truths of divine revelation are opened and come into view, and the wisdom and grace of God in the work of redemption are seen, the more they are contemplated and relished, the greater will be their enjoyment and happiness; and great will be their evidence and assurance of the love and favor of God, and that they shall enjoy him and all the blessings and glory of his kingdom forever. Then, as it is predicted of that time, "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." (Isa. xxxii. 17.) Then the eminent degree of righteousness or holiness to which all shall arrive will be attended with great enjoyment and happiness, which is often meant by *peace* in Scripture. And the effect and consequence of this high degree of holiness and happiness, in seeing and loving God and divine truth, shall be that they shall have a steady, quiet assurance of the love of God, and of his favor forever, which will greatly add to their happiness.*

They will have unspeakable satisfaction and delight in worshipping God in secret and in social worship, whether more private or public, and their meditations and study on divine things will be sweet. The Word of God will be to them sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, and they will rejoice in the truths there revealed more than the men of the world ever did, or can do, in all riches. In public assemblies, while the heart and lips of the preacher will glow with heavenly truth, and he pours light and instruction on a numerous congregation, they will all hang upon his lips, and drink in the divine sentiments which are communicated, with a high relish and delight. And in such entertainments there will be enjoyed unspeakably more real pleasure and happiness than all the men of the world ever found in the most gay, brilliant company, with the most agreeable festivity and mirth, music, and dancing, that is possible. The latter is not worthy to be compared with the former.

Then religious enjoyment, whether in company or alone,

* Assurance of the love of God, and of enjoying his favor forever, is here said to be the *effect* of the exercise of holiness, and that peace of soul and enjoyment which attends it; so that persons must *first* be holy, and love God, *before* they can have any assurance or evidence that God loves them, and that they shall be saved; the latter being the effect, and not the cause, of the former. They, therefore, turn things upside down, and contradict this passage, and the whole of divine revelation, and even all reason and common sense, who hold that persons must *first* have assurance, or at least believe, that God loves them with an everlasting love, *before* they can love God, or exercise any degree of true holiness, and that the latter is the effect of the former.

will appear to be a reality, and of the highest and most noble kind, and every one will be a witness and instance of it. There will then be no brier and thorns to molest enjoyment, or render company disagreeable, but all will be amiable, happy, and full of love, and render themselves agreeable to every one. Every one will behave with decency and propriety towards all, agreeably to his station and connections. The law of kindness will be on the tongues of all, and true friendship, of which there is so little among men now, will then be common and universal — even Christian love and friendship, which is the most excellent kind of friendship, and is, indeed, the only real, happy, lasting friendship. And this will lay a foundation for a peculiar, happy intimacy and friendship in the nearest relations and connections, by which conjugal and domestic duties will be faithfully performed; and the happiness of those relations will be very great, and the end of the institutions of marriage and families be answered in a much greater degree than ever before, and they will have their proper effect in promoting the enjoyment of individuals, and the good of society.

Then the happiness and joy each one will have in the welfare of others, and the blessings bestowed on them, will be very great. Now the few Christians who exercise disinterested benevolence have, as the apostle Paul had, great heaviness, and continual sorrow in their hearts, while they behold so many miserable objects, and are surrounded with those who are unhappy in this world, and appear to be going to everlasting destruction by their folly and obstinacy in sin. They have great comfort and joy, indeed, in the few who appear to be Christians and heirs of eternal life. When they see persons who appear to understand and love the doctrines of the gospel, and to have imbibed the amiable, excellent spirit of Christianity, and to be the blessed favorites of Heaven, they greatly rejoice with them in their happiness, and can say, as Paul did, "What thanks can we render to God for you for all the joy wherewith we rejoice *for your sakes* before our God?" (1 Thess. iii. 9.) But in the millennium, the happiness and joy of each one will be unspeakably greater in the character and happiness of all. The benevolence of every one will be gratified and pleased to a very high degree by all whom he beholds, all with whom he converses, and of whom he thinks; and in their amiable character and great happiness, he will have pleasure and joy in proportion to the degree of his benevolence, which will vastly surpass that degree of it which the best Christians now exercise. There will then be no such infinitely miserable objects which

are now every where to be seen, to excite painful grief and sorrow; and the character of Christians will then be much more beautiful and excellent than that of real Christians is now, as they will abound so much more in all holy exercise and practice, and their present enjoyment and future happiness in heaven will be more evident and realized by each one, which will give pleasure and joy to every one, in the amiable character and happiness of others, even beyond all our present conceptions. "There shall be no more a pricking brier unto the church, (or particular Christians,) nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them." (Eze. xxviii. 24.) But all will live in pleasing harmony and friendship, and every one will consider himself as surrounded with amiable friends, though he may have no particular connection or acquaintance with them, and all he will see or meet as he passes in the public streets, or elsewhere, will give him a peculiar pleasure, as he will have good reason to consider them to be friends to Christ and to him, and as possessing the peculiarly amiable character of Christians; and this pleasure will be mutual between those who have no particular knowledge of each other. But this enjoyment and pleasure will rise much higher between those who are particularly acquainted with each other's character, exercises, and circumstances; and especially those who are in a more near connection with each other, and whose circumstances and opportunities lead them to form and cultivate a peculiar intimacy and friendship.

But it is not to be supposed that we are now able to give a proper and full description, or to form an adequate idea of the happiness, joy, and glory of that day; but all that is attempted, and our most enlarged and pleasing conceptions, fall much short of the truth, which cannot be fully known till that happy time shall come. They who now have the best and highest taste for divine truth, and the greatest religious enjoyment, who abound most in Christian love, and have the most experience of the happiness of Christian friendship, and attend most to the Bible, and study the predictions of that day, will doubtless have the clearest view of it, and most agreeable to the truth, and the highest satisfaction and pleasure in the prospect of it.

There are many other things and circumstances which will take place in that day, which are implied in what has now been observed, or may be inferred from it and from the Scripture, by which the advantages, happiness and glory of the millennium will be promoted; some of which will be mentioned in the following particulars: —

1. All outward, worldly circumstances will then be agreeable

and prosperous, and there will be for all a sufficiency and fulness of every thing needed for the body, and for the comfort and convenience of every one.

This may be inferred from many passages of Scripture, which refer to that day; among which are the following: "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." (Ps. lxvii. 6.) "Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal, and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous. In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen, likewise, and the young asses that ear the ground, shall eat clear provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." (Isa. xxx. 23, 24; xxxiii. 24; lxv. 21–23. Eze. xxxiv. 23–27.) "They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make him afraid." (Mic. iv. 4.) "The seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things." (Zech. viii. 12.)

This plenty and fulness of the things of this life and worldly prosperity, by which all will be in easy, comfortable circumstances as to outward conveniences and temporal enjoyments, will be owing to the following things: —

1. To the kindness and peculiar blessing of God in his providence. When all the inhabitants of the world shall become eminently pious, and devote all they have or can enjoy in this world to God, to the reigning Savior, he will smile upon men in his providence, and bless them in the city and in the field, in the fruit of the ground, in the increase of their herds, and of their flocks, in their basket and in their store, as he promised he would bless the children of Israel, if they would be obedient to him. (Deut. xxviii. 1–8.) There will be no more unsuitable seasons or calamitous events to prevent or destroy the fruits of the earth; but every circumstance with regard to rains and the shining of the sun, heat, and cold, will be so ordered as to render the earth fertile, and succeed the labor of man in cultivating it, and there will be nothing to devour and destroy the fruit of the field.

2. To the great degree of benevolence, virtue, and wisdom which all will then have and exercise with respect to the affairs of this world, there will then be no war to impoverish, lay waste, and destroy. This has been a vast expense and scourge to mankind in all ages, by which poverty and distress have been spread among all nations; and the fruits of the earth, produced and stored by the hard labor of man, have been devoured, and worse than lost. Then there will be no unrighteous persons, who shall be disposed to invade the rights and property of others, or deprive them of what justly belongs to them; but every one shall securely sit under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. Then there will be no lawsuits, which now, in civilized nations, are so vexatious and very expensive of time and money. Then, by the temperance in all things which will be practised, and the prudent and wise care of the body, and by the smiles of Heaven, there will be no expensive, distressing, desolating pestilence and sickness, but general health will be enjoyed, by which much expense of time and money will be prevented.

The intemperance, excess, extravagance, and waste in food and raiment, and the use of the things of life which were before practised, will be discarded and cease in that day. By these, a great part of the productions of the earth which are for the comfort and convenience of man are now wasted and worse than lost, as they are, in innumerable instances, the cause of debility of body, sickness, and death. But every thing of this kind will be used with great prudence and economy, and in that way, measure, and degree which will best answer the ends of food, drink, and clothing, and all other furniture, so as to be most comfortable, decent, and convenient, and in the best manner furnish persons for their proper business and duty. Nothing will be sought or used to gratify pride, inordinate, sensual appetite or lust; so that there will be no waste of the things of life; nothing will be lost.

And at that time, the art of husbandry will be greatly advanced, and men will have skill to cultivate and manure the earth in a much better and more easy way than ever before; so that the same land will then produce much more than it does now, twenty, thirty, sixty, and perhaps a hundred fold more; and that which is now esteemed barren, and not capable of producing any thing by cultivation, will then yield much more for the sustenance of man and beast than that which is most productive now; so that a very little spot will then produce more of the necessaries and comforts of life than large tracts of land do now; and in this way, the curse which

has hitherto been upon the ground for the rebellion of man will be in a great measure removed.

There will also, doubtless, be great improvement and advances made in all those mechanic arts, by which the earth will be subdued and cultivated, and all the necessary and convenient articles of life, such as all utensils, clothing, buildings, etc., will be formed and made in a better manner, and with much less labor than they now are. There may be inventions and arts of this kind which are beyond our present conception. And if they could be now known by any one, and he could tell what they will be, they would be thought by most to be utterly incredible and impossible, as those inventions and arts, which are now known and familiar to us, would have appeared to those who lived before they were found out and took place.

It is not impossible, but very probable, that ways will yet be found out by men to cut rocks and stones into any shape they please, and to remove them from place to place with as little labor as that with which they now cut and remove the softest and lightest wood, in order to build houses, fences, bridges, paving roads, etc.; and those huge rocks and stones, which now appear to be useless, and even a nuisance, may then be found to be made and reserved, by Him who is infinitely wise and good, for great usefulness and important purposes. Perhaps there is good reason not to doubt of this. And can he doubt of it who considers what inventions and arts have taken place in latter ages, which are as much an advance beyond what was known or thought of in ages before as such an art would be beyond what is now known and practised? The art by which they removed great stones, and raised them to a vast height, by which they built the pyramids in Egypt, and that by which huge stones were cut and put into the temple of Jerusalem, is now lost, and it cannot be conceived how this was done. This art may be revived in the millennium; and there may be other inventions and arts to us inconceivably greater and more useful than that. Then, in a literal sense, the valleys shall be filled, and the mountains and hills shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth, to render travelling more convenient and easy, and the earth more productive and fertile.

When all these things are considered which have now been suggested, and others which will naturally occur to them who attend to this subject, it will appear evident that in the days of the millennium there will be a fulness and plenty of all the necessaries and conveniences of life to render all much more easy and comfortable in their worldly circumstances and enjoy-

ments than ever before, and with much less labor and toil, and that it will not be then necessary for any men or women to spend all or the greatest part of their time in labor in order to procure a living, and enjoy all the comforts and desirable conveniences of life. It will not be necessary for each one to labor more than two or three hours in a day, and not more than will conduce to the health and vigor of the body; and the rest of their time they will be disposed to spend in reading and conversation, and in all those exercises which are necessary and proper in order to improve their minds and make progress in knowledge, especially in the knowledge of divinity, and in studying the Scriptures, and in private and social and public worship, and attending on public instruction, etc. When the earth shall be all subdued and prepared in the best manner for cultivation, and houses and enclosures and other necessary and convenient buildings shall be erected and completely finished, consisting of the most durable materials, the labor will not be hard, and will require but a small portion of their time, in order to supply every one with all the necessaries and conveniences of life; and the rest of their time will not be spent in dissipation or idleness, but in business more entertaining and important, which has been now mentioned.

And there will be then such benevolence and fervent charity in every heart, that if any one shall be reduced to a state of want by some casualty, or by inability to provide for himself, he will have all the relief and assistance that he could desire, and there will be such a mutual care and assistance of each other, that all worldly things will be in a great degree and in the best manner common, so as not to be withheld from any who may want them; and they will take great delight in ministering to others and serving them, whenever and in whatever ways there shall be opportunity to do it.

2. In that day, mankind will greatly multiply and increase in number till the earth shall be filled with them.

When God first made mankind, he said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish (or fill) the earth, and subdue it." (Gen. i. 28.) And he renewed this command to Noah and his sons, after the flood, and in them to mankind in general. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. ix. 1.) This command has never yet been obeyed by mankind; they have yet done but little, compared with what they ought to have done, in subduing and filling the earth. Instead of this, they have spent great part of their time and strength in subduing and destroying each other, and in that impiety, intemperance, folly, and wickedness, which have

brought the divine judgments upon them; and they have been reduced and destroyed in all ages by famine, pestilence, and poverty, and innumerable calamities and evil occurrents; so that by far the greatest part of the earth remains yet unsubdued, and lies waste without inhabitants; and where it has been most subdued and cultivated and populous it has been, and still is, far from being filled with inhabitants, so that it could support no more, except in a very few instances, if in any. An exact calculation cannot be made; but it is presumed that every man who considers the things which have been mentioned above will be sensible that this earth may be made capable of sustaining thousands to one of mankind who now inhabit it; so that if each one were multiplied to many thousands, the earth would not be more than filled, and all might have ample provision for their sustenance, convenience, and comfort. This will not take place so long as the world of mankind continue to exercise so much selfishness, unrighteousness, and impiety as they do now and always have done; but there is reason to think they will be greatly diminished, by their destroying themselves and one another, and by remarkable divine judgments, which will be particularly considered in a following section.

But when the millennium shall begin, the inhabitants which shall then be on the earth will be disposed to obey the divine command to subdue the earth, and multiply until they have filled it; and they will have skill, and be under all desirable advantages to do it, and the earth will be soon replenished with inhabitants, and be brought to a state of high cultivation and improvement in every part of it, and will bring forth abundantly for the full supply of all; and there will be many thousand times more people than ever existed before at once in the world. Then the following prophecy, which relates to that day, shall be fulfilled: "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it in his time." (Isa. lx. 22.) And there is reason to think the earth will be then, in some degree, enlarged in more ways than can now be mentioned or thought of. In many thousands, hundred of thousands, yea, millions of instances, large tracts now covered with water, coves, and arms of the sea, may be drained, or the water shut out by banks and walls, so that hundreds of millions of persons may live on those places and be sustained by the produce of them, which are now overflowed with water. Who can doubt of this, who recollects how many millions of people now inhabit Holland and the Low Countries, the greatest part of which was once covered with the sea, or thought not to be capable of improvement? Other instances might be mentioned.

Though there will be so many millions of millions of people on the earth at the same time, this will not be the least inconvenience to any, but the contrary; for each one will be fully supplied with all he wants, and they will all be united in love, as brethren of one family, and will be mutual helps and blessings to each other. They will die, or, rather, fall asleep, and pass into the invisible world, and others will come on the stage in their room. But death then will not be attended with the same calamitous and terrible circumstances as it has been and is now, and will not be considered as an evil. It will not be brought on with long and painful sickness, or be accompanied with any great distress of body or mind. They will be in all respects ready for it, and welcome it with the greatest comfort and joy. Every one will die at the time and in the manner which will be best for him and all with whom he is connected; and death will not bring distress on surviving relatives and friends; and they will rather rejoice than mourn, while they have a lively sense of the wisdom and goodness of the will of God, and of the greater happiness of the invisible world to which their beloved friends are gone, and where they expect soon to arrive. So that, in that day, death will in a great measure lose his sting, and have the appearance of a friend, and be welcomed by all as such.

3. In the millennium, all will probably speak *one language;* so that one language shall be known and understood all over the world, when it shall be filled with inhabitants innumerable.

The whole earth was once and originally of one language, and of one speech. (Gen. xi. 1, 6.) And the folly and rebellion of men was the occasion of their being confounded in speaking and understanding this one language, and the introduction of a variety of languages. This was considered as in itself a great calamity, and was ordered as such, and it can be considered in no other light. Had men been disposed to improve the advantages of all speaking and understanding one language to wise and good purposes, this diversity never would have taken place; and when men shall become universally pious, virtuous, and benevolent, and be disposed to use such an advantage and blessing, as having one speech and language will be for the glory of God and the general good, it will doubtless be restored to them again. This may easily and soon be done, without a miracle, when mankind and the state of the world shall be ripe for it. When they shall all become as one family in affection, and discerning and wisdom shall preside and govern in all their affairs, they will soon be sensible of the great disadvantage of being divided into so many different tongues, which will greatly impede that uni-

versal free intercourse which will be very desirable, and of the advantage of all speaking and using one language. And God may so order things in his providence that it will then be easy for the most learned and wise to determine which is the best language to be adopted to be universally taught and spoken; and when this shall be once determined, and published through the world by those who are acknowledged to be the wisest men, and best able to fix upon a language that shall be universal, and have a right to do it, all will freely consent to the proposal; and that language will be taught in all schools, and used in public writings and books that shall be printed, and, in a few years, will become the common language, understood and spoken by all, and all or most of the different languages now in the world will be forgotten and lost. All the learning and knowledge of former ages contained in books in different languages worth preserving will be introduced and published in the universal language, and communicated to all. This will, in a great measure, supersede and render useless the great expense of time, toil, and money which is now bestowed on teaching and studying what are called the *learned languages*. Many thousands, if not millions, of youths are now consuming years in learning these languages, at great expense of money, and thousands of teachers are spending their lives in attending to them. It is thought by many now that this is a useless and imprudent waste of time and money, in most instances, at least; it will appear to be much more so when there shall be one universal language, which shall be understood and spoken by all, and when the books written in that language shall contain all the useful learning and knowledge in the world, and all further improvements will be communicated to the world in that language.

And when this language shall be established and become universal, all the learning and wisdom in the world will tend and serve to improve it, and render it more and more perfect; and there can be no doubt that such improvements will be made that persons will be able to communicate their ideas with more ease and precision, and with less ambiguity and danger of being misunderstood, than could be done before.

And ways will be invented to learn children to read this language with propriety, and to spell and write it with correctness, with more ease, and in much less time than it is now done, and with little labor and cost. And ways may be invented, perhaps something like the short hands which are now used by many, by which they will be able to communicate their ideas, and hold intercourse and correspondence with each other who live in different parts of the world, with much

less expense of time and labor, perhaps a hundred times less, than that with which men now correspond.

This will also greatly facilitate the spreading useful knowledge, and all kinds of intelligence which may be a benefit to mankind, to all parts of the world, and render books very cheap and easy to be obtained by all. There will then be no need of translations into other languages, and numerous new impressions, in order to have the most useful books read by all. Many hundreds of thousands of copies may be cast off by one impression, and spread over all the earth. And the Bible, one of which, at least, every person will have, by printing such a vast number of them at one impression may be afforded much cheaper than it can be now, even though it should be supposed that no improvement will be made in the art of printing and making paper, which cannot be reasonably supposed; but the contrary is much more probable, viz., that both these will then be performed in a better manner, and with much less labor and expense, than they are now executed. None can doubt of this who consider what improvements have been made in these arts since they were first invented.

This universality of language will tend to cement the world of mankind so as to make them *one* in a higher degree, and to greater advantage, than otherwise could be. This will absorb the distinctions that are now kept up between nations speaking different languages, and promote a general, free communication. It is observed when there was but one language in the world, that the people were *one*. (Gen. xi. 6.) And this will greatly facilitate their united exertions to effect whatever may be for the public good.

Therefore, since there will be so many and great advantages in having one universal language, understood and used by all mankind, and it will answer so many good purposes, when men shall be disposed to make a right improvement of it, — and since it may be so easily effected when men shall be united in piety and benevolence, and wisdom shall reign among them, — there is reason to think that God will so order things in his providence, and so influence and turn the hearts of mankind, as in the most agreeable manner to introduce the best language, to be adopted and used by all in that day, in which great and peculiar favor and blessings will be granted to the world, far beyond those which had been given in preceding ages. And this is agreeable to the Scripture, which speaks of that day as distinguished and remarkable for the union and happiness of mankind, when they shall have *one heart and one way;* and this seems to be expressly pre-

dicted. When speaking of that time it is said, "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. iii. 9.) These words have been understood in another sense; but the most natural and consistent meaning seems to be, that the people shall not then have a mixed language, speaking with different tongues, which would naturally separate them into different parties, and render them barbarians to each other in their worship; but God will so order things at that time that one language shall be introduced and spoken by all, — and which shall be more perfect, elegant, and pure, free from those defects, inconsistencies, and that jargon which before attended all or most languages, — that they may all, even all mankind, call upon the name of the Lord with one voice, and in one language, to serve him with one consent; by which they shall be united in worship and divine service, not only in heart, but in lip, as mankind never were before.

4. The church of Christ will then be formed and regulated, according to his laws and institutions, in the most beautiful and pleasing order.

This is implied in what has been said, but is worthy of a more particular attention. There will then be but one universal catholic church, comprehending all the inhabitants of the world, formed into numerous particular societies and congregations, as shall be most convenient, to attend on public worship and the institutions of Christ. There will be no schisms in the church then; Christians will not be divided into various sects and denominations, but there will be a beautiful and happy union in sentiment respecting the doctrines, worship, and institutions of Christ, and all will be of one heart and one way, and serve Christ with one consent. The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, and all the institutions of Christ, will be attended in due order, with solemnity and decency, and, being accompanied with divine efficacy, will have their proper and saving effect. All the children will be members of the church, having the initiating seal applied to them, and being solemnly devoted to Christ in baptism; and they will be faithfully brought up for him, and early discover their love to Christ not only in words, but by obeying him and attending upon all his institutions. The discipline which Christ has instituted will be faithfully practised so far as there shall be any occasion; and Christians, by watching over each other in love, and exhorting and admonishing one another, will prevent, or immediately heal, all offences. In those respects, and in others not here mentioned, and perhaps not thought of, the church of Christ will then be

the best regulated, most beautiful and happy society that ever existed, or can be formed on earth. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, the church, he shall appear in his glory." Then what is predicted in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, and many other prophecies of the same event, shall be fulfilled. God says to his church, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations. I will make the place of my feet glorious. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!"*

5. Then Christianity will appear in its true beauty and excellence, and the nature and genuine effects of it will be more manifest than ever before, and the truth and amiableness of it be exhibited in a clear and striking light.

Christianity has, hitherto, been generally abused and perverted by those who have enjoyed the gospel, and but little of the genuine spirit and power of it has appeared among those who have been called Christians. They have, the most of them, disobeyed the laws of Christ, and misrepresented and perverted the doctrines and institutions of the gospel to accommodate it to the gratification of their selfishness, pride, and worldly spirit, and have hated and persecuted one another unto death. They have divided into innumerable sects and parties, and have not been agreed in the doctrines and institutions of the gospel, but have embraced various and contrary opinions concerning them, and contended about them with wrath and bitterness. And the greatest part of the Christian world have been as openly vicious as the heathen nations, if not more so. And as the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by the wicked lives of the Jews, (Rom. ii. 24,) so

* It has been a question whether in the millennium, when the church shall be thus universal, and be brought to such a well-regulated, holy, and happy state, there will be any need of civil rulers to preside and govern in temporal matters. It is said that every thing which will be necessary of this kind will be regulated and ordered by particular churches, and civil officers will not be needed, and will have nothing to do.

But when it is considered that the church of Christ is not a worldly society, and has no concern with temporal matters and the concerns of the world, considered merely as such, or any further than they are included in obedience to the laws of Christ, and that there will be need of regulations and laws or orders with respect to the temporal concerns of mankind, it will appear proper and convenient, if not necessary, that there should be wise men chosen and appointed to superintend and direct in worldly affairs, whose business it shall be to consult the temporal interest of men, and dictate those regulations from time to time which shall promote the public good, and the temporal interest of individuals.

the name of Christ has been blasphemed by infidels and others, through the various kinds of wickedness of those who have been called Christians, "by reason of whom, the way of truth has been evil spoken of." (2 Pet. ii. 2.) But few in the Christian world, in comparison with the rest, have honored Christ by entering into the true meaning and spirit of the gospel, loving it and living agreeably to it, and those few have been generally hidden and overlooked by the multitude of merely nominal Christians; and genuine Christianity is not to be found in the faith and lives of those in general who assume the name of Christians, but in the Bible only, since the most who profess to know Christ, by their doctrines and works do deny him.

But in the millennium the scene will be changed, and Christianity will be understood and acted out in the true spirit and power of it, and have its genuine effect in the lives and conduct of all; and when it comes to be thus reduced to practice by all, it will appear from fact and experience to have a divine stamp, and that the gospel is indeed the wisdom of God and the power of God, forming all who cordially embrace it to a truly amiable and excellent character, and is suited to make men happy in this world and that which is to come. Then all the disgrace and reproach which has come upon Christ, his true followers, and upon Christianity, by the wickedness and enmity of men and the abuse of the gospel, shall be wiped off. This is foretold in the following words: "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth." (Zeph. iii. 19, 20.) After the various schemes of false religion and infidelity have been tried by men and the evil nature and bad effects of them discovered, real Christianity, as it is stated in divine revelation, when it shall be understood by all and appear in universal practice, will shine with peculiar lustre and glory; and the beauty and excellence of it, and the happiness it produces, will be more apparent and affecting, and be more admired by the contrast, than if no such delusion and false religion had taken place. This is represented in the last words of David the prophet: "And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. xxiii. 4.) When the sun rises in a clear morning, after a dark, stormy night, and the tender grass springs up fresh and lively, it is much more pleasant and refreshing than if it had not been preceded by such a night.

6. The time of the millennium will be, in a peculiar and eminent sense and degree, *the day of salvation*, in which the Bible and all the doctrines, commands, and institutions contained in it, will have their proper and designed issue and effect; and that which precedes that day is preparatory to it, and suited in the best manner to introduce it and render it eminently the gospel day.

The Spirit of God will then be poured out in his glorious fulness, and fill the world with holiness and salvation, as floods upon the dry ground. All the preceding influences of the Holy Spirit, in converting and saving men, are but the first fruits which precede the harvest which will take place in that latter day. This was typified in the Mosaic institutions. The most remarkable festivals were the passover, the feast of the first fruits, and the feast of tabernacles, upon which all the males in Israel were commanded to attend at Jerusalem. The passover typified the death of Christ, and he was crucified at the time of that feast. The feast of the first fruits, or pentecost, as it is called in the New Testament, typified the first fruits of the death of Christ in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of men when the gospel was first preached, which took place at the time of this feast. (Acts ii. 1.) The feast of tabernacles, which was "the feast of *ingathering*, which was in the end of the year," (Ex. xxxiv. 22,) was a type of the millennium, which will be in the latter end of the world, when the great and chief ingathering of souls to Christ and his church shall take place. This is the time when Christ will see the fruit of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. To this day most of the prophecies of Christ, and salvation, and of the good things which were coming to the church, have their principal reference, and they will have their chief fulfilment then. This is the day which our Lord said Abraham saw with gladness and joy. "Your father Abraham rejoiced (or leaped forward) to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." (John viii. 56.) He saw the day of Christ in the promise made to him, that in his seed all nations should be blessed; which will be accomplished in the millennium, and not before. This is the day of Christ, the day of his great success and glory. This is the gospel day, in comparison with which all that precedes it is night and darkness.

Then the chief end of divine revelation will be answered. It has been given with a chief reference to that time, and it will then be the means of producing unspeakably greater good than in all ages before. It will then be no longer misunderstood, and perverted and abused, to support error and wickedness, but be universally prized more than all riches, and

improved to the best purposes, as the fountain of knowledge and wisdom; and all the institutions and ordinances appointed by Christ will then have their effect. They will then be understood and take place in due order, and be attended in a proper manner, and the wisdom and goodness of Christ in ordaining them will be seen and experienced by all. Then the gospel will be preached as it never was before since the days of inspiration, in which the ministers of the gospel will be eminently burning and shining lights, exhibiting the important, affecting, glorious truths of the gospel in a clear and striking light, and in a manner most agreeable and entertaining, which will fall into honest and good hearts, and be received with the highest relish and pleasure, and bring forth fruit abundantly. The Sabbath will be a most pleasant and profitable day, and improved to the best and most noble purposes; and the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to divine institution, will greatly conduce to the edification of the church, and appear in their true importance and usefulness, as they never did before; these and all other institutions of Christ being appointed with special reference to that day, when they will have their chief use, and answer the end of their appointment.

As the winter in the natural world is preparatory to the spring and summer, and the rain and snow, the shining of the sun, the wind and frost, issue in the order, beauty, and fruitfulness of the vegetable world, and have their proper effect in these, and the end of winter is answered chiefly in what takes place in the spring and summer, and the former is necessary to introduce the latter, and in the best manner to prepare for it; so in the moral world, or the church of Christ, what precedes the millennium is as the winter, while the way is preparing for the summer, and all that takes place has reference to that happy season, and is suited to introduce it in the best manner and most proper time, when the gospel, so far as it respects the church in this world, and all the institutions and ordinances of it, will have their genuine and chief effect in the order, beauty, felicity and fruitfulness of the church.

SECTION III.

In which is considered which Thousand Years of the World will be the Millennium, and when it will begin.

All who attend to the subject of the millennium will naturally inquire when this happy time will take place, and how

long it will be before it shall be introduced. And some who have undertaken to find from Scripture, and to tell the precise time and the year when it will begin, have been evidently mistaken, because the time on which they fixed for this is passed, and the event has not taken place. From this, some have concluded that it is uncertain whether there will ever be such a time, and others have exploded all attempts to find from Scripture when this time will be.

Though there be good reason to conclude that the exact time, the particular day or year of the beginning of the millennium, cannot be known, and that it will be introduced gradually, by different successive, great, and remarkable events, the precise time of which cannot be known before they take place; and that the prophecies respecting it are so formed on design, that no man can certainly know when the event predicted shall be accomplished, within a year or a number of years, until it is manifest by the accomplishment, as such knowledge would answer no good end, but the contrary; yet there is no reason to suppose that this is left wholly in the dark, and that it is impossible to know, within a thousand or hundreds of years, when this glorious day shall commence, which is so much the subject of prophecy, in which the glory which is to follow the sufferings of Christ and the afflictions of his church will chiefly consist, so far as it relates to the transactions of time.

Though it may be evident from Scripture that the seventh thousand years of the world will be the time of the prosperity of the church of Christ on earth, yet this event may come on by degrees, and be in a measure introduced years before that time; and the church may not be brought to the most complete and happy state of that day, but still have further advances to make after this seventh thousand years begin, and continue some years after they are ended; so that the particular year of the beginning or end of this time cannot be known before it actually takes place.

It is thought that there is reason to conclude, from divine revelation, that the seventh millenary of the world will be the time in which the church of Christ will enjoy a Sabbath of rest, and be brought to its highest and chief prosperity in this world, which is so much the subject of Scripture prophecy, and that the end of the world and the day of general judgment will take place soon after this millennium is over. The following observations are designed to point out some of the evidence of this: —

It has been already observed, that the creation of the natural world in six days, and the seventh being appointed to be

a day of rest, does afford an argument that the moral world, or the church and kingdom of Christ, of which the natural world is a designed type in many respects, will be six thousand years in forming, in order to be brought to such a state as in the best manner to enjoy a thousand years of rest, peace, and prosperity; a day in the natural world, in this instance, representing a thousand years in the moral world; and that time being thus divided into *sevens*, to have a perpetual rotation to the end of it, denotes that the world is to stand but seven thousand years, as "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," and that this has been handed down as the opinion of many ancients, both Jews and Christians.* It is acknowledged that this argument is not sufficient to establish this point, considered by itself alone; but it is thought to have some weight when joined with other arguments from Scripture which coincide with this and serve to strengthen it.

It is observable that the number *seven* is the most noted number mentioned in Scripture in many respects, and is a *sacred number* above all others. And in the Mosaic ritual, which contained many typical institutions, the Israelites were commanded not only to observe every seventh day as a day of rest, but every seventh year as a Sabbath and year of rest; and the seventh month in every year was a festival and sacred month above all other months of the year. In this month was the feast of tabernacles, which was to be observed seven days with great joy. On the first day of this month was the feast of trumpets, when the trumpets were to be blown through all the land, which was a type of the extraordinary preaching of the gospel which will introduce the millennium. And on the tenth day was their annual and most solemn fast, on which they were to confess their sins and afflict their souls, and atonement was made for them, which was a figure of the repentance and extraordinary humiliation to which the inhabitants of the world will be brought by the preaching of the gospel, attended with the dispensations of divine Providence suited to promote this, previous to their being raised up to the prosperity and joy of that day. And then the joyful feast of ingathering, in the end of the year, came on, on the fifteenth day of the same month. This was a type of the happy, joyful millennium, in the seventh and last thousand years of the world, in which vast multitudes, even most of the redeemed, will be gathered into the church and kingdom of Christ, in comparison with whom all who

* See p. 254, and note.

shall have been saved before this time are but the first fruits of the purchase of Christ.

It is evident that this feast of tabernacles in the seventh month was a designed type of the millennium, from what has been now observed, and what has been said, on the three most remarkable feasts appointed in the law of Moses, in the preceding section; but this evidence is strengthened, and made certain, by what is said by the prophet Zechariah. When he is speaking of the millennium, and predicting that happy day, he says, "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, *and to keep the feast of tabernacles*." (Zech. xiv. 16.) By the feast of tabernacles are meant the enjoyments and blessings of the millennium, of which all nations shall then partake, and which were typified by that feast.

All these things seem to point out the seventh thousand years of the world to be the time of the millennium. But there is yet greater evidence of this, which will serve to strengthen what has been observed, and show that it is not mere conjecture.

The prophecies in the Book of Daniel, of the rise and continuance of the little horn, and of the time in which the church shall be in a state of affliction, and those in the Revelation, of the continuance of the beast, who is the same with the horn, and of the duration of the afflicted state of the church during that time, when examined and compared, will lead to fix on the seventh thousand years of the world to be the time of the millennium.

In the Revelation, the time of the continuance of the beast, after his deadly wound was healed, is said to be forty and two months. (Rev. xiii. 5.) And the time in which the church should be trodden down, afflicted, and oppressed, is said to be forty and two months, a thousand two hundred and sixty days, and a time and times and half a time. (Rev. xi. 2, 3; xii. 6, 14.) The same term of time is denoted by each of these expressions. A year was then reckoned to contain three hundred and sixty days, and a month consisted of thirty days. In forty and two months were a thousand two hundred and sixty days; and a time and times and half a time are three years and a half, which contain forty and two months, and a thousand two hundred and sixty days. So long the beast — the idolatrous persecuting power exercised by the bishop of Rome, the pope — is to continue; during which time the church of Christ is to be oppressed, afflicted, and opposed — represented by the holy city being trodden under foot by the

Gentiles, the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and a woman persecuted and flying into the wilderness to hide herself from her enemies, where she is fed and protected during the reign of the beast, which is to continue a thousand two hundred and sixty years, a prophetical day being a year. At the end of those years the pope, and the church of Rome of which he is the head, will be destroyed; and according to the representation in the Revelation, the kingdom of the devil in the world will fall at the same time, and the kingdom of Christ be set up on the ruins of it, and the millennium will take place.

If it were known when the bishop of Rome first became what is designed to be denoted by the beast, — the time of his fall, and of the end of the church of Rome and of Satan's kingdom in the world, — when the millennium will commence could be ascertained to a year. But as this beast rose gradually, from step to step, till he became a beast in the highest and most proper sense, this involves the subject in some degree of uncertainty, and renders it more difficult to determine at which considerable increase and advance of the bishop of Rome in power and influence the thousand two hundred and sixty years began. He had great influence — not only in the church in the ecclesiastical matters, but in the temporal affairs of the Roman empire, and of the kingdoms which were erected in it by the invasion of the northern nations — before he was publicly acknowledged and declared to be universal bishop, which was done in the year of Christ 606. This greatly increased his influence and power in the Christian world, and the church was now become exceeding corrupt. If the one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic years be reckoned from this time, they will end in the year 1866 — seventy-four years from this time, viz., 1792. But the pope did not become a temporal prince, and publicly assume civil jurisdiction, till the year 756, when Pepin, the king of France, then the most powerful prince in Christendom, made him prince over a large dominion, and he assumed civil authority, and upon this he subdued three kings or kingdoms, and they fell before him, according to the prediction of him in the prophecy of Daniel. (Dan. vii. 8, 20, 24.) And he soon had such power over the nations as to set up an emperor in Germany to be his tool, by whom to raise himself to universal empire, reserving to himself and claiming power over the emperor, and over all kings in the Christian world, to set them up and crown them, or depose them when he pleased.

This is the most remarkable epoch, when the pope became a beast in the most proper sense, from whence his reign is to

be dated. Twelve hundred and sixty years from this date, 756, will end near the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world. But as he rose to this height gradually, and was a beast in a lower sense long before this, it is reasonable to suppose that he will fall by degrees, until his usurped power is wholly taken from him, and the false church of Rome, the great whore, utterly destroyed; and that he has been falling many years, and that as the time of his reign draws nearer to a close, more remarkable events, by which he and that church will come to total ruin, will take place in a more rapid succession. But this will be more particularly considered in the next section.

Therefore, these prophecies of the rise and fall of antichrist, or the beast, and the time of his reign, and of the afflicted state of the church of Christ, fix the end of these and of the reign of Satan in the world of mankind, near the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world, when the millennium will be introduced, though many things will take place before that time, by which the pope and his interest will gradually decline and sink, and in favor of the church and kingdom of Christ, to prepare the way for the introduction of the millennium.

In the Book of Daniel, the same idolatrous, persecuting power, and the time of the continuance of it, and of the oppressed state of the church, are predicted; and the time is fixed and expressed by a time and times and a half, or the dividing of time, (Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7,) which is the same mentioned by St. John in the Revelation, and is one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days; that is, so many years, as has been observed above. There it is said by him who interpreted to Daniel the vision of the four beasts, "the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down and break it in pieces." This is the Roman empire. "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise. And another shall arise after them, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Dan. vii. 23–25.) This last horn, king, or ruling power, is evidently the same with the little horn mentioned in the eighth chapter, and is the same with the beast when he was recovered to life, after he had been wounded unto death, which St. John saw; that is, the pope of Rome, in whom the power and idolatry of this empire is revived and

continued. The character given of each is the same in substance, and the time of their continuance is the same, which must end, according to every probable calculation, at or about the end of the sixth thousand years of the world, or about two thousand years after the incarnation of Christ.* And at the end of this time, this power and kingdom is to be destroyed, and a total end put to the Roman empire, represented by the beast; and the kingdom of Christ, in its fulness and glory, shall then take place, in the universal prevalence and reign of his church and people, which is expressed in the following words: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end; and the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii. 26, 27.)

In the eighth chapter of Daniel we have a different representation of this same kingdom, power, or empire, by a little horn which came forth out of one of the four horns, into which the Grecian empire, founded by Alexander the Great, was divided some time after his death. This is the Roman, or fourth and last empire, upon the destruction of which the kingdom of Christ is to prevail and fill the world. Daniel describes this little horn as it appeared to him in the vision, in the following words: "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great towards the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land; and it waxed great even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And a host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered." (Dan. viii. 9–12.) And this vision is explained by the angel interpreter in the following part of the chapter. (Verses 23–25.) What is said of this horn respects the Roman kingdom and empire, from the beginning and end of it, the ruin of which shall open the way for the kingdom of Christ to flourish in the world and the reign of the saints on the earth. And what is said of this power or kingdom here respects the idolatry that should be supported and practised by it, and the opposition it should make to God and his people, in which it

* See Bishop Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies.

should prevail, and have power to oppress and persecute the saints; and there is special reference to the pope and those under his influence and direction, when he should be at the head of this empire and rule in it, who is particularly designed in the seventh chapter, denoted by the little horn, "which had eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things, which should make war with the saints and prevail against them, and speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints of the Most High." (Dan. vii. 8, 21, 25.) This power, indeed, did oppose and destroy the mighty and holy people, and stand up against the Prince of princes before it existed, and was exercised by antichrist in the church of Rome. Jesus Christ, the Prince of princes, was put to death by this power. And this horn persecuted the church, especially at times, for near three hundred years after the death of Christ; all of which is included in the description of the horn or kingdom which is the chief subject of this chapter; but there is particular and chief reference to what this power would be and do, when in the hands of antichrist, for he, above all others, has spoken great things, and opened his mouth to blaspheme God and the saints. He has introduced and promoted the grossest idolatry, and stood up against the Prince of princes; has magnified himself in his heart even to the Prince of the host, the Lord Jesus Christ, and has been the most cruel and bloody persecutor of the saints for many ages; he has cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered, and has destroyed vast numbers of the holy people, or the saints. Gabriel, who was ordered to make Daniel understand the vision, said to him, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be *in the last end of the indignation;* for at the time appointed the end shall be." (Dan. viii. 19.) His interpretation had chief respect to the latter end of this kingdom under the reign of antichrist, in whose end the kingdom should be ruined, and exist no more.

The question is here asked, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" Bishop Newton says, "In the original there is no such word as *concerning;* and Mr. Lowth rightly observes, that the words may be rendered more agreeably to the Hebrew thus: *For how long a time shall the vision last, the daily sacrifice be taken away, and the transgression of the desolation continue?* etc. After the same manner the question is translated by the Seventy, and in the Arabic version, and in the vulgar Latin."

The answer is, "Unto two thousand and three hundred

days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." (Dan. viii. 13, 14.) These are no doubt prophetical days, a day being put for a year. The time therefore specified is two thousand and three hundred years. All the difficulty in fixing on the time of the end of these days lies in determining at what time the reckoning begins. This is left in a degree of uncertainty, as is the beginning of the reign of antichrist, which is to continue twelve hundred and sixty years; the reason of which doubtless is, that it should not be precisely known to a day or year when this time will end till it shall be actually accomplished, while it is made certain the time of the end is fixed, and they who are willing to attend to the subject, and make use of all the light that is offered, may have sufficient evidence to determine within a few years when the time will be, and not be left in a total uncertainty about it.

The little horn, which is the chief subject of this vision, and was to do such great things against the holy people, the church, came forth out of one of the four notable horns, towards the four winds of heaven, which grew out of the goat, after the one great horn was broken which the goat had at first. (Verse 8.) The goat is the king of Grecia, or the Grecian empire, erected by Alexander the Great, who was the first king, or the great horn. (Verse 21.) After the death of Alexander, and when his successors in his family were extinct, four kings were set up, and divided the great empire between them into four kingdoms, which division was towards, or according to the four winds, east, west, north, and south. Cassander, one of the four kings, took the western part of the empire, or the western kingdom, containing Macedon, Greece, etc. Out of this horn came forth the little horn, which "waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." (Verse 9.) This horn Gabriel explains to be "a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences, who shall stand up." (Verse 23.) The Romans are meant by this horn, who were west of Greece, and may be considered as included in the western part of the empire, which was one of the four horns out of which they rose, and soon were conspicuous; and Prideaux says, "Their name began to grow of great note and fame among foreign nations, by their conquests in a few, not above five or six and twenty years after the above-mentioned partition of the empire of the goat into four horns or kingdoms. And they were a distinct people, and doubtless made some figure when the four horns first existed. From this time, and this small beginning, the Romans arose by their policy, power, and conquests, until they arrived to a vast and universal empire. And as they

existed as a people when the Grecian empire was divided into four kingdoms or horns, and they were really included in the western horn, and soon rose out of it, and went on and grew to universal empire, their beginning may properly be reckoned from the time when the western horn or kingdom arose, in which they were included, as they soon after that became a distinct power and kingdom, and were a little horn, and proceeded to conquer and destroy the horn out of which they came, and to subdue all the other horns.

This partition of the Grecian empire into four kingdoms, or horns, was just about three hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, or the beginning of the Christian era; and as the incarnation of Christ was about the beginning of the fifth thousand years of the world, two thousand and three hundred years from the rise of the four horns will end at or near the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world. Or, if the beginning of the little horn should not be reckoned from that time, but from the time when the Roman power or horn began to be conspicuous and acknowledged among the nations, two thousand three hundred years from that time will carry them but a few years beyond the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world; so that this number serves to confirm what has been observed from the other numbers in Daniel and the Revelation, viz., that the reign of antichrist, who is the last head of the Roman empire, will end about the beginning of the seventh millenary of the world, when the millennium will begin, and the meek, the saints, shall inherit the earth, take the kingdom, and reign with Christ.

In the last chapter of Daniel, "one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The answer is made in a very solemn manner, in the following words: "It shall be for a time, times, and a half. And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." He who shall scatter the power of the holy people or the saints, is the same with the horn mentioned in the seventh chapter, who should "wear out the saints of the Most High," which is the same event which is here expressed in different words; and the time of his doing this is the same which is mentioned here: "And they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Dan. vii. 25.) That is, three prophetical years and a half, in which are one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetical days, which are put for so many years; and this is the same power which is called a beast in the Revelation, who was to do the same thing mentioned here, viz., it was

given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And the same time is there fixed for his doing this. "And power was given unto him to continue (or practise and make war) forty and two months," after he was recovered to life from being wounded unto death, (Rev. xiii. 3, 5, 7,) which is just three years and a half, or twelve hundred and sixty days.

Daniel heard, but did not understand the answer, and, therefore, put the following question, "Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" The answer is, "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Here are two different numbers or times mentioned, and neither of them agrees exactly with the foregoing answer. In that, the time of the continuance of the persecuting power which shall scatter and wear out the saints is limited to one thousand two hundred and sixty years. In the answer to Daniel's question, two different numbers of years are mentioned, when those evil things shall come to an end, and the profanation of the church, and the worship and ordinances of Christ, shall cease, and the church shall be restored to due order, and be blessed and brought to a happy, glorious state, viz., one thousand two hundred and ninety, and one thousand three hundred and thirty-five years. The first is thirty years longer than the time mentioned above and in the Revelation, and the last exceeds it seventy-five years. This seeming difference may be reconciled by observing, that these answers do not respect precisely the same event. The former expresses the time of the continuance and reign of antichrist, in which he shall oppress the church of Christ; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, he shall be destroyed. The latter looks forward to the recovery of the church of Christ from her low, afflicted, broken state, to a state of peace and prosperity, in the proper use and enjoyment of the worship, institutions, and ordinances of Christ, which have been so greatly corrupted by the false church of Rome. It may take some time to effect this, after the pope and the church of Rome are wholly destroyed and extinct. As the corruption and perversion of the church, worship, and ordinances of Christ were brought on by degrees, and considerable advances were made in this after antichrist arose, and the pope became a persecuting beast; so doubtless the church will not be wholly purified when this beast shall be destroyed; but it will be some time after this before all

corruptions and errors in doctrine and practice will be wholly extirpated, and the church appear in her true beauty, and come to a state of universal, established peace and prosperity. Within thirty years after the beast shall be slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame, or at the end of one thousand two hundred and ninety years, the church may become universal, and all nations be members of it, and it may arrive to a state of great purity and peace, and an end be put to all her troubles, and most of the wicked be swept off from the face of the earth by some remarkable event and sudden stroke, by which the kingdom of Satan shall be nearly extinct, and his influence among mankind almost wholly cease. But the church of Christ may not arrive to the most pure and happy state which it shall enjoy under forty or fifty years after this. For this happy period Christians must wait; and they will be in a peculiar and high degree blessed who shall come to this happy and glorious state of the church, when the first resurrection shall be universal and complete, and the millennial state established and brought to its full stature and proper height in holiness and happiness, which took place in a considerable degree, and might properly be said to have begun, a number of years before. But these events, and the precise time and manner of their taking place, will be fully known, and the prophecies by which they are foretold will be better understood when they shall be actually accomplished, and all the mistakes which are now made respecting them will be rectified; until which time, they must be in some measure sealed. Nevertheless, it may be evident from divine revelation, that the end of the reign of antichrist draws near, and the time of deliverance of the church from the dark and low state in which it has been near twelve hundred years, and of the ruin of the kingdom of Satan in the world, is not far off, and that these great events will come on within two hundred years, or about that time, and that the seventh thousand years of the world is the time fixed for the prosperity of the church of Christ, and the reign of the saints on earth. And it is hoped that what has been now observed on this point is sufficient to convince every unprejudiced, attentive inquirer that there is satisfactory evidence from prophecy and other things contained in Scripture, that the predicted millennium will take place at that time.

It has been observed, that as antichrist rose gradually from one degree of influence and power to another till he became a complete beast, so this persecuting, idolatrous, anti-Christian power will fall by degrees, until it is wholly taken out of the way; and there may, and probably will be, one thousand two

hundred and sixty years between the most remarkable steps by which he rose, and as great and remarkable steps by which he is to fall and go into perdition.*

The corruption and apostasy of the church had early beginnings, and the usurped, tyrannical, and worldly power of the bishops, especially of the bishops of Rome, soon began to take place. The apostle Paul, speaking of the grand apostasy which has actually taken place in the church of Rome, under the influence and power of the *man of sin*, that is, the pope, says, that the seeds of all this were then sown, and this mystery of iniquity did then begin to work with power and energy, ἐνεργεῖται, which was to be kept under powerful restraints for a while, but should openly appear and be acted out when these restraints should be taken off. (2 Thess. ii. 3–8.) In the third century, "the bishops assumed in many places a princely authority, particularly those who had the greatest number of churches under their inspection, and who presided over the most opulent assemblies. They appropriated to their evangelical function the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty; a throne surrounded with ministers, exalted above their equals the servants of the meek and humble Jesus, and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and the minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority." † And about the middle of that century, Stephen, the bishop of Rome, a haughty, ambitious man, aspired to a superiority and power over all the other bishops and churches, and his preëminence in the church universal was acknowledged. From this time to the reformation from popery in the sixteenth century, when the pope began to fall in a remarkable degree, and lost a great part of his power and influence, which he is never like to regain, are one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Luther, the first reformer, arose in the year of Christ 1517. If we

* The time of the captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians was fixed in the prophecy of Jeremiah to seventy years. But this prediction had reference to different beginnings and endings. It was just seventy years from the first captivity, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and many other Jews were carried to Babylon to the decree of Cyrus giving leave to the Jews to return, and ordering that the temple and Jerusalem should be rebuilt. And it was seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple to the publishing of the decree of Darius, by which the building of the temple was completed and the Jews restored to their former state.

So the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the captivity of the church of Christ in spiritual Babylon will doubtless have different beginnings, and, consequently, different endings. As the power and tyranny of the bishop and church of Rome rose from less beginnings to their full height, so the fall is to be gradual, till it is completed. And from each remarkable advance, there are one thousand two hundred and sixty years to as remarkable successive events, by which the kingdom and the power of the beast shall decline, and be utterly destroyed.

† Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, third century, chap. ii.

reckon back from that time, one thousand two hundred and sixty years will carry us to the year 257, which is the very time in which Stephen, bishop of Rome, claimed and usurped the power and preëminence above mentioned, and which was, in some measure at least, granted to him.

And as this man of sin rose higher and higher, and became more conspicuous by one remarkable step after another, in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, until he was publicly invested with temporal dominion about the middle of the eighth century, viz., in the year 756, when he became a complete beast, and assumed the greatest authority both in civil and religious matters in the Christian world, and, in fact, had more power and influence over all persons and things in the church and state than any other man, so there is good reason to conclude he will gradually fall, by one remarkable event after another, from the time of the reformation in the sixteenth century, when his power and influence in the Christian world were so greatly eclipsed, until this son of perdition shall be utterly destroyed, not far from the end of the twentieth century, or the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world. And with the fall of this son of Satan, the kingdom of Satan, which has been so great and strong in this world for so long a time, will come to an end, and he will be cast out of the earth, and chained down in the bottomless pit; which event will be succeeded by the kingdom of heaven, which shall comprehend all the men then on earth, in which the saints shall reign a thousand years.

The facts and events which have taken place since that time, especially in the present century, coincide with such a conclusion, and serve to strengthen and confirm it. The pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome are sinking with a rapid descent. The kings and nations who once wandered after this beast, and joined to support and exalt this anti-Christian power, now pay little regard to him; they neither love nor fear him much, but are rather disposed to pull him down and strip him of his riches and power. The dissolution of the society of the Jesuits, the banishing them and confiscating their riches, who were a great support of that church and the pope; the kings' taking from the pope the power, which he claimed as his right, to nominate and appoint all the bishops to vacant sees, and actually taking it upon themselves to do this, by which a vast stream of money, which used to be poured into the coffers of the pope, is taken from him, and falls into the hands of these kings; the increase and spread of light, by which the tyranny, superstition, and idolatry of the church of Rome and its hierarchy are more clearly discerned

and exposed to the abhorrence and contempt of men; and especially the great increase of the knowledge of the nature, reasonableness, and importance of religious and civil liberty, and the rapid spread of zeal among the nations to promote these, — all these are remarkable events, which, among others not mentioned, serve to confirm the above conclusion that the pope is falling with increasing rapidity; and there is reason to expect, from what has come to pass and is now taking place, and from Scripture prophecy, that yet greater and more remarkable events will soon take place, and come on in a swift and surprising succession, which will hasten on the utter overthrow of the beast and all his adherents, and that the time predicted will soon come when the ten horns, or kings, who have agreed in time past, and given their kingdom unto the beast, shall change their minds, and hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. (Rev. xvii. 16, 17.)

SECTION IV.

In which is considered what Events are to take place, according to Scripture Prophecy, before the beginning of the Millennium, and to prepare the Way for it.

By attending to the events predicted, which are to take place before the millennium, and which are to introduce it, further evidence will come into view that it will not commence long before the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world, nor much later, and, therefore, that it will be in that thousand years, and begin about two hundred years from the end of the eighteenth century.

The seven vials, or cups — which contained the seven last plagues, or remarkable judgments, which are to be executed upon the beast and his adherents, and upon the world of mankind — are to be poured out during the time of the reign of the beast and the existence of the false church of Rome, and which will issue in the destruction of the beast and of that church. This is evident from the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Revelation. The first vial respects the beast and his followers, and brought sore calamities upon them, expressed in the following words: "And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them who worshipped his image." (Rev. xvi. 2.) A number of these vials must have been already poured out, as the beast has existed above a thousand years

already; and, therefore, the effects of the last vial, which include his utter destruction, will not reach much more than two hundred years from this time, and, consequently, these effects will soon begin to take place, if they have not already began in some measure; for, as the pouring out, or running, of the seven vials is limited to the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the continuance of the beast, there are not two hundred years for each vial, and some may run longer, and others a shorter time of this space.

Some acquaintance with the history of the calamitous events which have taken place, answering to the prophetic description under those vials which have been poured out, is necessary in order to know how and when it has been fulfilled, and how many vials appear to have already run out, and which is now running. Mr. Lowman has taken pains to show, from many credible historians, that the remarkable calamitous events which have taken place, and which have especially affected the beast and his followers and brought great and distressing evils upon them, have answered to the evils and events described in prophetic language under the successive first five vials of wrath; and there appears to be satisfactory evidence that the judgments predicted under these vials have already been executed on antichrist and his supporters and followers, and that the reformation began by Luther, and the remarkable events attending it, was the judgment predicted by the pouring out of the fifth vial, to be inflicted on the beast and the church of Rome. This vial was to be poured out on the seat, or, as it is in the original, the throne, of the beast; "and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain." (Rev. xvi. 10.) When the Protestant reformation came on, Protestants had light — had discerning and wisdom, prosperity and joy; but the pope and his followers suffered great vexation and anguish; every event turned against them; their light was turned into darkness; their policy and counsels, by which they had prospered and obtained their ends before, were now turned into foolishness, and they were baffled and confounded; and their attempts to suppress the northern heresy, as they called it, and to crush the Protestants, proved abortive, and turned against themselves in a remarkable manner. And those events proved like a lasting, painful sore to them, from which they have not recovered to this day. "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." They blasphemed God, by attributing what took place in favor of truth and the cause of Christ to the exertions and obstinacy of wicked men, and

calling the truths of the gospel and holiness, espoused and propagated by the reformers, the delusions and works of Satan, and treating the reformation, and the work of God, as if it were the work of the devil. They also blasphemed the God of heaven, by persisting in their gross idolatry, worshipping saints and images, in the face of the light exhibited by the reformers, which idolatry is called blasphemy in the Bible; and the famous Council of Trent, which was called by the pope at that time, and sat eighteen years, were so far from complying with the reformation, that they anathematized the persons, doctrines, and practices by which it was introduced and supported; and formed decrees in favor of the power and tyranny of the pope, and the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome, and in some instances went beyond any thing that had ever been decreed by any council before, in favor of these abominations. "Thus they repented not of their evil deeds."

This vial began to be poured out near the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the year 1517, when Luther began to oppose the wickedness of the church of Rome and the power and evil practices of the pope; and from that time the influence and power, or throne, of this man of sin has been diminishing, and he is in a great measure deposed, and has fallen almost to the ground from that high throne and unlimited power in church and state to which he had, before that, aspired and risen. As it is near three hundred years since the fifth vial was poured out, there is good reason to conclude that the sixth vial began to be poured out and has been running from the latter end of the last century, at least, i. e., for a hundred years or more; that it is near run out, and the seventh and last vial will begin to run early in the next century. Whether this be so or not, may be determined with greater and more satisfactory evidence, by attending to the prophetic description of the events which are to take place under those vials; and as the sixth vial is supposed to be now running, there is reason to pay a more particular and careful attention to the prophetic language by which the events under this vial are expressed, that the meaning may be understood and applied to the events which are pointed out, so as to be clearly discovered, and the signs of these times be discerned by all who will properly attend to this interesting subject.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great River Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." Ancient Babylon was a type of the anti-Christian church of Rome.

By that, the church of Israel was afflicted and reduced to a state of captivity seventy years, until it was taken by Cyrus and Darius, whose kingdoms were east of Babylon. So the church of Christ has fallen under the power of this anti-Christian church, and power is given to the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them, and to continue forty-two months; therefore, the church of Rome is called Babylon in the Revelation.

The River Euphrates ran through Babylon, under the walls of the city, and a wide and deep moat, filled with water from the river, encompassed the city on the outside of the walls; so that the river was not only a defence to the city, but afforded a supply of water and fish, and other provisions, brought into it by water carriage. Cyrus, who came against Babylon with an army of Medes and Persians, took the city, by turning the water of the river from the usual channel, in which it went under the walls of the city, and ran through it, and dried up the water in that channel, by which a way was opened for his army to pass into the city under the walls, in the dried channel, where the river used to run. Accordingly the army marched in and took the city in the night, when the inhabitants were either asleep or intoxicated with drinking, as that was the time of a great festival. In that night the king of Babylon was slain, and Cyrus took the kingdom for his uncle Darius, the Mede. (Dan. v.) *

In this prophecy there is an illusion to this manner of taking Babylon, by Darius and Cyrus, the kings of the east. The church of Rome is the antetype of Babylon. By the kings of the east are meant those, whoever they may be, who are or shall be enemies to the church of Rome, and wish to reduce and destroy it, and shall be made the instruments of it; as the eastern kings took Babylon, by drying up the River Euphrates. The riches and power of the pope and the church of Rome, and whatever serves as a defence and support of that church, answer to the River Euphrates in old Babylon, and the removal of those is meant by drying up the river, which will prepare the way for the enemies and opposers of this church to take possession of it and destroy it.

The river, in this sense of it, has been drying up for a century or more, while this sixth vial has been running, and there have been more remarkable instances of it in this century, some of which have been mentioned above, by which the riches of the church of Rome are greatly diminished, and she is stripped and becoming poor; and the power and influence

* See Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Book II.

of the pope is become very small and inconsiderable, and he is but little regarded by those who once worshipped him; and the way is fast preparing for the pope and his church to be hated, made desolate, and burned with fire." *

John goes on to relate a further vision which he had of events which are to take place under this vial, in the following words: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." (Rev. xvi. 13, 14, 16.) This is the first time that the false prophet is mentioned. And it appears from what is said of this false prophet, in the twentieth verse of the nineteenth chapter, that he is the same with the second beast, which is described in the thirteenth chapter, by which is meant the hierarchy of the church of Rome, or the pope and his clergy, in their ecclesiastical capacity, claiming to have the sole jurisdiction, and to be infallible dictators in every thing that relates to Christian faith and practice. The beast, as distinguished from the false prophet here, is the civil power of the Roman empire, with which the pope is invested, which he has claimed and exercised, by which he became a beast.

The dragon is the devil, who is represented as a powerful, invisible agent, having a great hand in all the wickedness in the world, and has set up and animates the beast and false prophet, making them instruments to answer his ends, being the spirit who works with all his power and deceptive cunning in these children of disobedience, and who are his children in a peculiar sense. These spirits are, therefore, the numerous spirits of devils who unite in one design, working miracles or wonders, as the word in the original is sometimes rendered, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world; that is, to all men who dwell on the earth, great and small, high and low. What is the tendency and effect of these invisible, evil spirits, what they design and do accomplish, when thus let loose, and suffered to go forth into all the world, there can be no doubt. They will corrupt the world, and promote all kinds of wickedness among men, to the utmost of their power and skill, and excite mankind to rise against God and the Redeemer, and oppose and despise all divine institutions and commands; and, at the same time, to

* See Edwards's Humble Attempt, &c., p. 153.

hate and destroy each other, and attempt to gratify every hateful lust of the flesh and of the mind, without restraint.

If any distinction is to be made between those evil spirits which are united in this same design, and like frogs pervade all places and assault all men, as the frogs did the Egyptians, in their attempts to seduce and corrupt them, especially those who live in the Christian world, that which comes out of the mouth of the dragon promotes infidelity, and influences and persuades men to renounce all religion, especially that which is inculcated in the Bible. The spirit which proceeds from the mouth of the beast inspires men with a worldly spirit, by which they are strongly attached to the things and enjoyments of this world, and eagerly pursue them, either by gratifying their fleshly appetites and lusts, in beastly uncleanness, and intemperance in eating and drinking, frolic and wantonness, or by indulging an avaricious spirit, which leads to all kinds of unrighteousness, and oppression of each other, according to their power and opportunity, or they eagerly pursue the honors of the world, in the gratification of pride and haughtiness, striving to outshine others in dress and high living, or in distinguished posts of honor. And though some persons, under the influence of the spirit of the beast, are more inclined to some one of these, and others to another, yet the same person will often pursue them all, and seek to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And all these will prevail more and more, under the influence of the spirit of the beast, and at the same time promote infidelity, and are promoted by that. The spirit which comes out of the mouth of the false prophet is a spirit of false religion and delusion, by which false doctrines and gross errors in principle and practice are imbibed and propagated.

These spirits of devils unite and are agreed in one design, to promote all kinds of vice and wickedness among men, and, to as great a degree as they possibly can, leading them to infidelity and impiety, and an endless train of gross errors and delusions in matters of religion, and hurrying them on in a greedy pursuit of the enjoyments of this world, in the indulgence of their lusts, and the gratification of their love of their own selves, and their pride in the practice of injustice and oppression, living in malice and envy, hating and speaking evil of one another, and engaging in fierce contention, cruel and destructive war, and murder. By this the world in general will be in arms against God and his Son; and they will be gathered and knit together, as one man, in open war with heaven and all the friends of Christ on earth. This is, doubtless, meant by these spirits of devils going out into the whole

world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It is not meant that they shall be gathered into one place on this globe, or any where else; but that they shall be united with one heart in the same cause of sin and Satan, against God, and his revealed truth and ways, in whatever part of the earth they live; and thus take arms, and rise in open rebellion, provoking the Almighty to battle, and, in a sense, challenging him to do his worst. Thus they will be as really gathered to the battle as an army are gathered together to engage in battle with another army, or to besiege a city.

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Armageddon is the Mountain of Megiddo, at the foot of which the memorable battle was fought between the Canaanites, the enemies of Israel, and Barak, and the army under him, when Sisera and his host were defeated and utterly destroyed, which was a complete overthrow of the Canaanites, and issued in the final deliverance of Israel from their yoke and power. This was a type of the total defeat and overthrow of the enemies of Christ and his church, which will issue in the peace and prosperity of the church in the millennial state. This is intimated in the concluding words of the song of Deborah and Barak, in which this victory and deliverance is celebrated. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them who love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might." (Judges v. 31.) There is, therefore, an allusion to the type in this prophecy of the event which was typified by it, viz., the overthrow of all the combined enemies of Christ and his church, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It cannot be reasonably inferred from this prediction that there will be a decisive battle between Christ and his followers, and their enemies, in any particular place. All that is signified by these words is, that as Jabin, king of Canaan, gathered together a great army under Sisera, to fight with the God of Israel and his people, at the foot of the Mountain of Megiddo, who were there overthrown and destroyed in battle, when "they fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." So, by the agency of the spirits of devils, under the superintendence and direction of divine Providence, the world of mankind in general, and especially those in Christendom, will be so corrupted and obstinately rebellious, in all kinds and the greatest degrees of wickedness, as to be united, and, in this sense, gathered together, all armed in a spiritual war against God, his cause and people. And their iniquity being full and they ripe for battle, God will arise as a man of war, and in his providence contend in battle with them till they be utterly destroyed from

the face of the earth. Thus "the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away;" and by this, way shall be made for the meek to inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (Ps. xxxvii. 11, 20.)

But this battle is to come on under the next vial, which is the seventh and last. When mankind shall be prepared and gathered together, by the great degree of all kinds of wickedness, while God has been waiting upon them, even to long-suffering, in the use of very powerful and all proper means to reclaim and reform them, he will arise to battle, and, by doing terrible things in righteousness, will manifest and display his awful displeasure with them for their great wickedness and obstinacy in rebellion against him; and the events will then take place which are predicted under the seventh vial.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, IT IS DONE." This vial being poured out into the air, denotes that it should affect and destroy Satan's kingdom and his followers in the world in general, who is the prince of the power of the AIR. And the voice from heaven, saying, *It is done*, is a prediction that the events under this vial, by which the battle before mentioned is to be carried on and completed, will utterly destroy the interest and kingdom of the devil in the world, and finish the awful scene of divine judgments on the anti-Christian church and the wicked world in general. The prophecy then goes on to give a general and summary account of the battle of that great day, from the seventh verse to the end of the chapter, and the great and marvellous effects it will have upon great Babylon, i. e., the church of Rome, and upon the nations of the world in general. There will be the greatest convulsions and revolutions in the political and moral world that have ever been, attended with awful judgments upon men, which are predicted in prophetic language. "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The great city, and great Babylon, seem to be one and the same thing, the church of Rome. In the next chapter, this same false church is called "Babylon the great," and "the great city which

reigneth over the kings of the earth." (Rev. xvii. 5, 18.) What is meant by this city being divided into three parts will be better known when the prediction shall be accomplished. It doubtless intends, that which shall break the anti-Christian church into pieces, and will issue in the ruin of it, the fatal blow being struck. Perhaps it intends a division and opposition among those who have been the members and supporters of that church, by which this spiritual Babylon shall fall, or which shall hasten on the ruin of it; as a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, but is brought to desolation. In the prophecy of this kingdom of antichrist by Daniel, in the latter end of it, he says, "The kingdom shall be *divided;* and by this it shall be partly broken." (Dan. ii. 41, 42.)

"And the cities of the nations fell." Divine judgments, and a peculiar measure of wrath, shall fall upon the Christian world in which the anti-Christian kingdom has been set up; but the rest of mankind shall share in the calamity of that day, and be punished for their wickedness, to which this expression seems to have respect. The cities of the nations of the world are their strength, defence, and pride. These shall be demolished and wholly taken away, that they shall no more be able to tyrannize over one another. The pride and power of Mahometans and heathen nations shall be made to cease by a series of divine judgments. "The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, in that day. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." (Isa. ii. 12, 15, 17; xiii. 11.) The same is predicted in the following words: "I have cut off the nations, their towers are desolate; I have made their streets waste, that none passeth by; *their cities are destroyed*, so that there is no man, there is none inhabitant. Therefore, wait upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." (Zeph. iii. 6, 8.) These words doubtless have reference to the events which were to take place under the sixth and seventh vials, when the nations and the kingdoms of the world are to be *gathered*, and God will rise up to battle, to the prey, and pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, for their obstinate

continuance in sin and rebellion against him; and all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy; and thus the cities of the nations shall fall, the nations shall be cut off, their towers made desolate, and their cities destroyed.

The prophecy under the seventh vial goes on, "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great." There is reference in those words to the destruction of the Canaanites, in the great and terrible battle, when the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them, and they died, and there were more that died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. (Josh. x. 11.) And God said to Job, "Hast thou seen the treasures of hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against *the day of battle and war*." (Job. xxxviii. 22, 23.) Therefore, when great judgments and awful destruction of men are predicted, they are represented by storms of great hail. "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies. The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones." (Isa. xxviii. 2, 17; xxx. 30.) "Say unto them who daub with untempered mortar, that it shall fall; there shall be an overflowing shower, and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it. I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. And I will plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, and I will rain upon him and his bands, and upon many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." (Eze. xiii. 11, 13; xxxviii. 22.) All these passages* will doubtless have their ultimate and most complete fulfilment under the seventh vial, and in the same sore calamities and judgments which are predicted in

* Unless that in Ezekiel be an exception, which is a description of the punishment of Gog and Magog, by which name the multitude of wicked men are called, who shall rise up when the millennium is ended, and will be destroyed when Christ shall come to judgment. These words may have their *ultimate* accomplishment then. But as the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel represent the wicked world which shall be destroyed before the millennium begins, as well as those who shall rise up when it shall end, this passage has a primary, if not an ultimate, reference to the destruction of the former.

the words under consideration, by the great hail which fell on men out of heaven. The hailstones are represented as weighing a hundred pounds, which is the weight of a talent, to denote the greatness of the judgments and destruction predicted, the sore and awful distresses which shall come on men; "for the plague thereof was exceeding great." These judgments will not reform the obstinate enemies of God on whom they shall fall; they will be exasperated and blaspheme God the more, until they are utterly destroyed, and swept off from the earth, agreeably to the prophecy which may be considered as referring ultimately to this dreadful scene. "And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven into darkness." (Isa. viii. 21, 22.)

This battle is more particularly described in the nineteenth chapter, from the beginning of the eleventh verse to the end of the chapter: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he who sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war." This person is further described, by which he appears to be the Lord Jesus Christ. "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." This does not mean that the inhabitants of heaven, or the saints on earth, will join in a visible army, and personally fight with the enemies of Christ and his church, and destroy them; but only that these shall join with Christ and be on his side when he shall arise in his providence, and by his power destroy his and their enemies. In this sense, all heaven will be with him, when he shall come forth to battle in his providence, and execute his wrath upon men in awful successive judgments, in which the angels may be used as invisible instruments of his vengeance; and he will do all this, in answer to the prayers of his church on earth, and in their cause, to vindicate and deliver them, and prepare the way for the prosperity of his church on earth. That he will be the great invisible agent in this battle, appears from the following words: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This is the battle of that great day of God Almighty. This awful scene proceeds and is yet further described: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly

in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both small and great." This is a strong, figurative, prophetic expression of the great slaughter and terrible destruction of mankind, when God Almighty shall come forth to battle, and manifest his hot displeasure and terrible wrath, in the judgment he will inflict on them. The representation of this battle, and the issue of it, goes on, and "I John saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies *gathered together*, to make war against him who sat on the horse, and against his army." These are the same who are mentioned, chap. xvi. 14–16, as *gathered together* to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, the meaning of which has been explained. And in this war and battle the beast and the false prophet were taken and destroyed, with their adherents. "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat upon the horse, whose sword proceedeth out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." By *the remnant*, are meant the rest of mankind, who by their sins make war with Christ, and are not included in the beast and false prophet and their followers, who belong to the kingdom of antichrist. Their being slain by the sword which proceeded out of the mouth of Christ, does not mean their conversion, but their falling victims to his vengeance, which is expressed by the fowls being filled with their flesh.

The same battle and slaughter of men is represented and predicted in figurative prophetic language, in the fourteenth chapter, where John describes a vision which he had of one like unto the Son of man, who sat upon a white cloud, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And it was said unto him, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." And it was said unto him, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Upon this vision it is to be observed, that by the harvest of

the earth, and the clusters of the vine of the earth, are meant the inhabitants of the earth, or mankind in general. And reaping the harvest, and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth, signifies the slaughter and destruction of the inhabitants of the earth; not every one of them indeed, for in the harvest and vintage, some ears of corn are commonly left standing, which escape the sickle, and a few scattering grapes are left on the vine when the clusters in general are gathered. And that this slaughter and desolation, which shall be made of the inhabitants of the world, will take place in consequence of their apostasy, and obstinate continuance and increase in sin, until they are become ripe, fully ripe, for this dreadful execution and destruction, by divine vengeance; therefore, that this reaping, and the harvest, and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth will not be a merciful dispensation towards the inhabitants then in the world, but the execution of divine vengeance, and an awful exercise and display of the displeasure and wrath of God, in the evils which shall fall on men, for their perseverance and increase in wickedness. This is represented and expressed in a striking manner, by the figure of casting the vintage into the great wine press of the wrath of God, and the large and amazing quantity of blood which proceeded from thence, signifying the great and general slaughter, and terrible sufferings of mankind, when this time of wrath shall come.

From this view of the events predicted under the sixth and seventh vials, it appears that, while the sixth vial is running, the way will be preparing for the overthrow of spiritual Babylon.

One event will take place after another, which will greatly weaken and remove the power and influence of the pope among the nations in Christendom, by taking away his riches, by drying up the stream of wealth, and the removal of other things, by which the church of Rome has been made strong, and stood as impregnable for many ages. But this will not be attended by any general reformation of professing Christians, or revival and great increase of the true church of Christ; nor will the moral state of the Christian world, or of mankind in general, be reformed and grow better, but the contrary. By the evil influence which the beast and the hierarchy of the church of Rome have had in the world, and by the power and agency of Satan, the unrestrained lusts of men will hurry them on to all kinds of wickedness, so that it will rise to a greater degree, and be more universal than ever before. Infidelity, deism, and atheism, and the most open and gross impiety and profanation of every thing

sacred, will prevail and abound; and false religion, and the grossest errors and delusions of all kinds, will take place and spread among those who do not discard all religion. And a worldly spirit will be very strong and prevalent among old and young, urging them on to the gratification of their sensual inclinations and lusts, in all kinds of intemperance and lewdness, and prompting them to acts of unrighteousness, oppression and cruelty, which will promote mutual hatred, bitterness, and contention, and spread confusion and every evil work in fierce and cruel wars and horrid murders. It is certain that the unclean spirits like frogs, those spirits of devils, when they go forth to the whole world, will promote all kinds of disorder and wickedness to the greatest degree, and set mankind against God, and all his revealed truth, and against each other, and every thing good and excellent, and make this world as much an image of hell as they possibly can; by which the inhabitants on earth in general will be united and gathered togther in arms against heaven, and become wholly ripe for destruction from the Almighty, for the battle of that great day which will come on under the seventh vial, and will be conducted, fought, and finished by Christ himself, against an ungodly world.

The prevailing unrestrained wickedness of men, which has been now mentioned, by which they shall be gathered unto this battle, is described by the apostle Paul in the following words: "This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, covenant-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. iii. 1–5.) All these evil characters have been in every age of the world; but they will then, in those *last days*, take place to a greater degree, and more universally, than ever before.

The true church of Christ will subsist and continue in this evil time of the prevalence of the powers of darkness, but the number of real Christians will be small; and many, even of them — if not the most — will probably be weak and low in their Christian exercises, by the influences and uncommon power of those evil spirits, and in too great a degree conformed to this world. They will be hated, opposed, and trodden down by the wicked, and be in an afflicted, suffering state in this dark and evil day. They will be in a great measure hidden and unknown, and the cause of Christ and

of truth will be reproached, and appear to be almost lost; and the true followers of Christ, his sheep, will be scattered into corners in this cloudy and dark day. (Eze. xxxiv. 12.) Whether wicked men, and enemies to the true servants of Christ, will persecute them unto death, and renew this horrid work, of which so much has been done in former ages, in this time when iniquity will abound to such a great degree, cannot now be determined by any thing said in Scripture respecting it. It is thought, by most, that, since the pope is brought so low, and his power and influence is still sinking so fast, and so much light is spreading in favor of civil and religious liberty, showing the reasonableness and importance of it, and the unreasonableness and folly of a persecuting spirit, and liberal sentiments respecting religion are propagated and increasing, — persecution on account of religious sentiments or practice is near come to an end, and never will be revived and practised again. This may appear most probable. But though the anti-Christian church should never persecute the faithful followers of Christ again, and a persecuting spirit should wholly cease among professing Christians of all denominations, yet infidels, who condemn all religious persecution, in every degree and form in which it has been practised, and boast of their liberal sentiments and spirit with respect to this, and use it as a strong and conclusive argument against Christianity itself, that professed Christians have, in so many instances, persecuted others — even *these infidels*, or their successors, may find true Christians, their doctrines and practices, to be so disagreeable and hateful to them, and, in their view, so hurtful to society, and so contrary to all that in which they place their own happiness and that of mankind, that, having all restraints taken off, and the power being put into their hands, they may think these men ought not to be suffered to live, and that it is for the good of society to have them extirpated and put to death, unless they can be brought to renounce their sentiments and practices by persuasion or punishments; and so become as determined, cruel persecutors of Christians as any have been in past ages. If this should take place, it will make a new, and perhaps greater and more striking, discovery of the wickedness of the human heart — especially of the hearts and real character of this sort of men — than ever has been exhibited before. And they who now know what is in man, from the character given of him in Scripture, and by the discovery mankind have made of their own hearts by words and deeds, and from a true acquaintance with their own hearts, must be sensible that nothing can prevent even men of this cast persecuting Christians but restraints from

Heaven. But, however, perhaps this discovery of what is in man is reserved to be made after the millennium shall be over, in the rise of Gog and Magog, when it may be exhibited in many respects to greater advantage, and so as to answer more important ends.

Though the true church of Christ must be in a low, dark state, in many respects, under this vial, yet there will doubtless be revivals of religion, and an increase of converts to real Christianity in many different places, and truth may be getting advantage, and more clearly distinguished from error, by those who have eyes to see; and Christianity be more and more refined in doctrines and practice, from the various errors and corruptions which have been introduced among the true followers of Christ, and every thing and all events will serve to bring on and introduce the millennium in the best manner, and in the most proper time.

The battle of that great day of God Almighty is to come on under the seventh vial, as has been observed. When the iniquity of the world of mankind shall be full, and they shall be united in open rebellion, and, in this sense, gathered together and armed against heaven; and, after God has waited long upon them in the use of all proper means to reclaim them, especially the Christian world, and they are become fully ripe for destruction, he will come forth to battle against them, and execute most fearful judgments upon them, and destroy them in a manner and degree which shall manifest his awful displeasure with them for their obstinacy in all kinds of wickedness. When these briers and thorns are set against God in battle, he will go through them and burn them together. (See Isa. xxvii. 4.) The destruction of the world of mankind by a flood, when the wickedness of man was become great, and the earth was filled with violence, and they continued obstinate in disobedience, while the long suffering of God waited upon them in the days of Noah, was an emblem of this battle; as also was the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, when their iniquity was full, which prepared the way for the people of God to take possession of that land. So God punished the nation of the Jews, by destroying them, and laying waste Jerusalem and the temple. When they had filled up the measure of their sins, wrath came upon them to the uttermost. This was a figure or type of this greater, more dreadful, and general battle under the seventh vial, when "the Lord shall come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (Isa. xxvi. 21.)

This battle, it has been observed, will not consist in the

church or Christians' raising armies, and fighting and carrying on war with the anti-Christian party, or with the wicked world; or in conflict between the former and the latter, respecting the truths and cause of Christ. But it will be commenced and carried on by Christ while invisible in heaven, invested with all divine power in heaven and earth, in the exercise of his providence, bringing judgments upon his enemies and a wicked world in such remarkable ways and manner as to be a clear and remarkable manifestation of his presence and power; of his displeasure with a wicked world for opposing him, his church, and the gospel; and an incontestable evidence of the truth of Christianity, by fulfilling his predictions and promises, taking vengeance on the enemies of his people, and effectually supporting them and their cause. He will doubtless make use of instruments in this battle.

The holy angels may be made the instruments of many events which shall be full of evil to wicked men. And the true church of Christ, his witnesses in his cause, and against the delusions and wickedness of the anti-Christian church and of the world, are represented as having a hand in bringing upon their enemies all the evils which will come upon them, because they will take place in answer to their prayers in their cause, and in order effectually to avenge his own elect of their adversaries. (Luke xviii. 7.) Therefore, it is said of them, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not, in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will. (Rev. xi. 6.) And the wicked themselves will be instruments of afflicting and destroying each other, in a very cruel and dreadful manner, by opposing and fighting with one another, and carrying on destructive and bloody wars, killing men by thousands, and laying waste whole countries and nations, by which the earth will be in a great degree depopulated, and rivers of blood will be shed by the unrestrained pride and cruel rage of man. And many will probably put an end to their own lives, and instances of suicide will be greatly multiplied.

But multitudes of mankind will be destroyed by the more immediate hand of God, by famine and pestilences, which will prevail in many countries, at different times, in an extraordinary manner, and to a degree never known before; by which vast multitudes will perish suddenly, and in circumstances very surprising and awful. And there will be earthquakes, and terrible storms of lightning and thunder, and inundations of water, by which many cities and places shall sink and be overflowed, with all the inhabitants; and multitudes will perish by these

and innumerable other evil occurrences, which will take place in an unusual manner and in quick succession; so that the hand of God will be visibly stretched out against the inhabitants of the world, to punish and destroy them for their wickedness, and the following prediction will be fulfilled in the full and awful extent of it: "Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again." (Isa. xxiv. 17–20.)

This battle will not be fought at once, so as to be soon finished, but will be carried on through a course of years, probably for more than a century and a half, in order to make a suitable and sufficiently clear display of the displeasure of God with a wicked world, and to give opportunity to men to repent and reform, when they are warned, called upon, and urged to it, by being made to suffer such a variety and long-continued series of calamities for their sins, and to discover and set in the most clear and striking light the hardness, obstinacy, and wickedness of the heart of man, while they continue disobedient and inflexible under all these terrible dispensations of Providence, suited to awaken and reform them, to teach them the evil of sin, and the awful displeasure of God with them, and to warn them to fly from the wrath to come, and unto Christ, as the only refuge, and go on to revolt yet more and more, and blaspheme the hand which inflicts these evils. By all this will be more clearly manifested than ever before, how totally lost and infinitely miserable mankind are, and their infinite need of a Redeemer; that no means that can be used, or methods taken to reclaim and save them, will be in the least degree effectual, unless the Spirit of God be given to change and renew their hearts, and, therefore, that the salvation of men depends wholly on the mere sovereign grace of God, even all that good, holiness, and salvation which shall take place in the millennium; and it will, in this respect, prepare the way for that day of grace.

This battle and terrible slaughter and destruction of men in so many ways, and for so long a course of years, will greatly lessen the number of mankind in the world, so that in the close of this terrible scene comparatively few will be left alive.

Those will be the Christians who shall be then members of the churches, and descendants from good people who have lived in former ages, and others who will then be true penitents, who will look back on the terrible scene which had taken place in the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and see and have a clear and affecting conviction of his displeasure with mankind for their sins, and the terribleness of his wrath, and will acknowledge the righteousness of it. They will consequently see the guilty, miserable, and utterly lost state of man, and their need of a Redeemer to make atonement for their sins, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit to renew their hearts and form them to right and truly Christian exercises; and will be clearly convinced of the truth of all the great and important doctrines of the gospel, and cordially embrace them; and they will repent and humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, and earnestly, with united hearts, cry to Heaven for the forgiveness of their sins, and for mercy on themselves and on their children, acknowledging their infinite ill desert, and flying to Christ, and sovereign grace through him, as their only refuge and hope. And then the scene will change. The battle will be over, divine judgments will cease, and there will be no more frowns on man in the providence of God, but all dispensations and events will be expressions of kindness and mercy, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out on them and their offspring, and all shall be holiness to the Lord, and the millennium will begin, and men will multiply and soon subdue the earth, and fill it with inhabitants.

As antichrist and the church of Rome will have a large share in the cup of indignation and wrath which will be poured out, so all the Christian world will have a distinguished portion of it, as the inhabitants of it are much more guilty than others. There is no reason to consider the anti-Christian spirit and practices to be confined to that which is now called the church of Rome. The Protestant churches have much of antichrist in them, and are far from being wholly reformed from the corruptions and wickedness, in doctrine and practice, which are found in that which is called BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Her influence in promoting delusion and wickedness extends, to some degree, to all the inhabitants of the world, and more especially the Christian world. She is the *mother* of all the false doctrines, superstition, infidelity, and abominable practices in the Protestant world. And where can the church be found, which is thoroughly purged from all these abominations? Some churches may be more pure, and may have proceeded farther in the reformation than others; but none are

wholly clear of an anti-Christian spirit, and the fruits of it. There may be, and in many instances doubtless there is, much of the exercise of the spirit of antichrist, in opposing what is called antichrist and the church of Rome, and by running into as great extremes another way. The apostle Paul said, this mystery of iniquity, the man of sin, which is antichrist, began already to work in the churches even in his day. (2 Thes. ii. 7.) How much of this then, may it be reasonably thought, is to be found in most, if not all, the churches now? In this view, the spirit and operation of antichrist are very extensive; and how few churches or individual Christians have so far come out from this mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, as not to be in any degree partakers of her sins, so as not to receive of her plagues! And while the sixth vial continues to run, it is not to be expected that the Protestant churches in general will grow more pure; but the evil spirits which are gone forth will promote and spread still greater corruption in doctrine and practice, by which they will be more ripe for divine judgments, and prepared to suffer in the battle under the seventh vial. The purest churches and real Christians will suffer much in this battle, and few will go wholly unpunished. By this, the rebels, or false-hearted professing Christians, will be purged out from among real Christians, and these shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly. (Dan. xii. 10.)

The Jews have suffered greatly for their peculiarly aggravated wickedness in rejecting and crucifying the Son of God, and they are now, and have been for near two thousand years, in a state of great affliction and under the manifest displeasure of Heaven to a great and distinguished degree. They yet continue a people distinguished from all other nations, though scattered all over the world as outcasts and vagabonds, and will continue thus a distinct people down to the millennium. But though they have suffered so much, they yet continue as obstinate as ever in rejecting Christ, and in all their sins; and there is reason to think they will not escape the battle of the great day of Almighty God, but great and new calamities will fall upon them, by which they may be much diminished, so as to be left few in number compared with what they have been, or are now; and the threatening denounced against that people by Moses will then be executed on them in the full meaning and extent of it: "And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the Lord thy God." (Deut. xxviii. 62.) But God will not make a full end of them, which he probably will do of some, if not of many other nations.

The revolutions which will take place in this battle will open the way for their return to the land given to their ancestors, and they which are left will repent and return to the Lord Jesus Christ, against whom they and their fathers have sinned, and unto their own land, and will become an eminently excellent part of the Christian church, who shall multiply, and fill all that vast tract of land given to Abraham and his posterity, from the River of Egypt, to the great River Euphrates, (Gen. xv. 18,) which has never yet been fully possessed by them. And their being thus received into the church of Christ will be as life from the dead to them, and to the Gentiles.

But whether they will continue a distinct people from all other Christians through the whole time of the millennium, or be so intermixed with others as not to be distinguished from them, will be determined by the event. But the latter is most probable, as the ends of their being preserved in such a state of distinction will then be answered, and those circumstances and things which have been, and still are, the means of their continuing a distinct and separate people, will then cease, such as circumcision, and the observance of other Mosaic rites. When they shall become Christians, their name by which they are now distinguished will be lost, and they will be absorbed in the Christian church, the true Israel of God, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ; and then there will be one fold, and one shepherd. And then, by this event, the following prediction will be fully accomplished: "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." (Isa. lxv. 15.)

That the above representation of this battle, which will be previous to the millennium, and will introduce it, taken from the passages in the Revelation which have been considered, is just, and agreeable to the true sense of them, further appears, and is confirmed by other parts of holy Scripture, especially by the prophecies of this same event, recorded in the Old Testament.

The destruction of the world of mankind by a flood, and the preservation of Noah and his family, who were by this brought into a new world, to be replenished by them, may be considered as a typical and prophetic representation of the great battle with the wicked world, previous to the millennium, by which the wicked will be swept off the earth, and the true church of Christ will be delivered and preserved, and the way opened for its prosperity and filling the earth.

The series of judgments brought upon Pharaoh and the

Egyptians, for their disobedience to JEHOVAH, and oppressions of his people, and their dreadful overthrow in the Red Sea, to prepare the way for the deliverance of Israel, was also a prophetic type of this great battle. So was the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, in order to introduce the people of Israel, and put them in possession of that land. Therefore, reference is had to this in the representation of the battle of that great day, as has been observed.

David was a man of blood, carried on great wars, and destroyed much people, and many nations, who were enemies to him, and the people of God, and by his conquests prepared the way for the peaceable and glorious reign of Solomon, and the building of the temple. In this, David was the type of Christ, when he shall go forth, clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and in righteousness make war, and destroy the nations of mankind, his enemies, to prepare the way for the millennium. Solomon was a type of Christ reigning in the millennium, when the church shall rise to a state of beauty and glory, of which Solomon's temple was a type, when the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The coming of Christ, in favor of his church, and of the redeemed, is spoken of as a time of vengeance to his and their enemies, in which they shall be punished and destroyed, and his people shall be avenged on them. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, *and the day of vengeance of our God;* to comfort all that mourn." "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." (Isa. lxi. 1, 2; lxiii. 4.) "And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." (Luke xviii. 7, 8.) "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." (Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1, 2.)

Balaam, in his remarkable prophecy of Christ and his kingdom, speaking of this latter day, when the Roman empire shall come to an end, and Christ shall have the dominion, represents this event as attended with great destruction of men. "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and

shall destroy him that remaineth in the city. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" This expresses a great and general destruction of men, so that comparatively few of them will be left alive. (Num. xxiv. 17–24.) The same is predicted in the song which God directed Moses to rehearse to the children of Israel, to be preserved by them. "For I lift my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If (or when) I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with their blood, and my sword shall devour flesh, and that with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." (Deut. xxxii. 40–43.) This prophecy is very parallel with that which has been mentioned, which relates to the great battle. (Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1, 2.) The same events are predicted in the following words of Moses: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurm, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew." (Deut. xxxiii. 26–28.) In these words, God is represented as riding forth to thrust out and destroy the enemies of his people, and upon this the prosperity of his church, the true Israel, is introduced. This prophecy, therefore, coincides with the description of the battle in the Revelation, as introductory to the millennium. The same events are predicted in the prayer or song of Hannah. "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces: out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the end of the earth, and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." (1 Sam. ii. 9, 10.)

This battle, by which the wicked will be destroyed, and the reign of Christ and his church on earth introduced, is frequently brought into view and predicted in the book of Psalms. The following predictions of this kind are worthy to be observed: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy

possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii. 8, 9.) There is reference to this prediction and promise in the following words of Christ: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces: even as I received of my Father." (Rev. ii. 26, 27.) The followers of Christ are said to do what he does for them and in their behalf in destroying their enemies, as they are engaged in the same cause, and are with him in these works of vengeance, and they who have overcome, and have arrived to heaven, will be with him in a peculiar manner, when he shall come forth to fight this great battle, and dash the nations of the world into pieces, as a potter's vessel is broken. Therefore, there is again reference to those words in the second Psalm, when Christ is represented as riding forth to the battle there described, followed by the armies in heaven, comprehending all who shall then have overcome. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 14, 15.) This is certainly the same with the battle of that great day of Almighty God, mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, as has been shown, and is predicted in the words now quoted from the second Psalm. There is a prediction of the same battle described in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, in the following words: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty; with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee." (Ps. xlv. 3–5.) In the next Psalm, the prosperity of the church is predicted, which will take place in the millennium, and the battle by which it will be introduced and effected is also described. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth, he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

The twenty-first Psalm contains a prediction of Christ, and foretells the destruction of the wicked, as introducing his reign on earth, and the prosperity and joy of the church. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger. The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men; for they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings, against the face of them. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength; so shall we sing and praise thy power." (Ps. xxi. 8–13.)

That the wicked shall be cut off and destroyed from the earth, that the saints may inherit it, is foretold throughout the thirty-seventh Psalm. "Evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shalt exalt thee to inherit the earth; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. The transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord."

The same thing is brought into view in the seventy-fifth, seventy-sixth, and ninety-seventh Psalms. "God is the judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted. In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel. In Salem, also, is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. The stout hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep; and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. He shall cut off the spirit of princes; he is terrible to the kings of

the earth." "The Lord reigneth, let the people rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols. Worship him all ye gods." This battle is brought into view, and foretold, in the hundred and tenth Psalm. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath, (i. e., in the great day of battle.) He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries."

In the prophecy of Isaiah, this battle, as it has been explained, is often brought into view, as connected with the prosperity of the church of Christ on earth, and introductory to it. Some instances of this will be mentioned. In the first five verses of the second chapter there is a prophecy of the happy state of the church in the last days, that is, in the millennium. In the four next verses is a description of the corruption, worldliness and idolatry of the visible church, and, consequently, of the world in general, as the reason of the displeasure with them, and his punishing them. And from the tenth verse to the end of the chapter, the manifestation of his displeasure, in his fighting against them and punishing them, is described. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

The eleventh chapter contains a prediction of the millennium, and of the slaughter of the wicked of the earth, which shall make way for it. "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." (Isa.

xi. 4.) These last words are parallel with those in the Revelation, by which this battle, and the effect of it, are expressed. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." (Rev. xix. 15, 21.)

In the thirteenth chapter is a prediction of the same thing. "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." (Isa. xiii. 6–11.) What is said in this chapter has reference to ancient Babylon, and the destruction of that and of other nations, in order to the deliverance and restoration of Israel. But it evidently has chief reference to the destruction of spiritual Babylon, and all the wicked in the world, in order to the deliverance and prosperity of the true, spiritual Israel of God, and will be most completely fulfilled in the latter, of which the former are types and shadows; as those prophecies which have a primary respect to the type do, generally, if not always, look forward to the antitype, and have their full and chief accomplishment in that, and the events which relate to it.

The twenty-fourth chapter is wholly on this subject, and describes the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the slaughter of the wicked, in clear and striking language, in consequence of which the church and people of God shall spread and prosper. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The earth shall be utterly emptied; for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they who dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. When thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the people, there

shall be as the shaking of an olive-tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord," etc.

Upon this prophecy it may be observed, that it is a prediction of great calamities on the inhabitants of the world in general, as a punishment for their sins, by which the earth is defiled, they having transgressed the laws of God, changed his ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant. They have broken the covenant of grace and peace made with Noah and his children, which, if it had been strictly observed, would have transmitted blessings, both holiness and happiness, to all mankind to the end of the world. By violating this covenant, corruption and iniquity, and all the idolatry and abominations which have taken place, or ever will be practised among men, have been introduced. And by breaking the everlasting covenant made with Abraham, and transgressing the laws, and changing the ordinances, which have been given and published by Moses and the prophets, by Jesus Christ and his apostles, — which, had they been observed, would have preserved the church uncorrupt, and spread true religion and holiness over the whole earth, — by disregarding and violating all these, the world is filled with wickedness, which will continue and increase, until mankind in general shall be ripe for that punishment, which God will inflict in those calamities and judgments which will destroy and sweep from the earth the greatest part of the inhabitants; so that there will be but comparatively *few men left* — like the few olives which remain on the tree after it is shaken, and the scattering grapes which hang on the vine after the vintage is over. Those who shall be left when the battle is over will lift up their voice, and sing for the majesty of the Lord. They will behold the terrible works of God, in which they will see his terrible majesty, and tremble, submit, approve, and adore, and praise and pray; and then the millennium will begin.

The prophecy goes on, and the same events, as to substance, and this battle and the consequence of it, are described in other words: "Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall move to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again." This battle is described in the Revelation in the same figurative language: "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And every island fled away, and the

mountains were not found." (Rev. xvi. 18, 20.) "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth; and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall they be visited.* Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." This prediction respects the great men and kings of the earth who exalt themselves in pride and wickedness, and tyrannize over men, and describes their overthrow in this battle. They shall be taken as prisoners, be punished for their pride and tyranny, and shut up that they may do no more mischief. Thus God "will cut off the spirit of princes, and be terrible to the kings of the earth." (Ps. lxxvi. 12.) And it is here said, that the millennium shall follow upon this in the reign of Christ and his church, "when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed." That is, then there shall be such spiritual light and glory in the flourishing of the kingdom of Christ on earth, and so superior to all the light and glory of the natural world, as that the latter shall be utterly eclipsed, and appear to be worthy of no regard, compared with the former.

The three next chapters are a continuation of prophecy of the same event, viz., the judgments which are to be inflicted on the false and degenerate professors of religion and the world of mankind in general, previous to the prosperity of the church and kingdom of Christ in the world, which will be evident to the careful, judicious reader, and that the predictions contained in them coincide with those which have been mentioned. It is needless to transcribe any particular passage

* What is meant by the host of the high ones and the kings of the earth being *visited* after many days is not so clear, at first view, and perhaps it is not now understood. God is often said in Scripture to *visit* those whom he punishes, and the word here in the original is frequently translated, to punish. They who are shut up in prison are often confined there, to be taken out after some days and receive their punishment. When it is here said, "And after many days shall they be visited," may not the meaning be, that those high ones and kings of the earth shall no more appear in this world, but shall be shut up in prison until the day of judgment, when they shall be brought forth and punished? As the fallen angels are bound in chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, so these unjust men will be reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished. When it is said of Zedekiah, that he should be carried captive to Babylon, it is added, "And there shall he be, until I visit him, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxxii. 5.) That is, until God should take him out of the world by death and to judgment, so that he shall never reign as king any more.

here, except the following: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpassed. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.) This must be a great and dreadful day of battle, punishment, and vengeance, which shall fall on the inhabitants of the earth in general, when all the blood which has been and shall be shed, from the beginning of the world to that day, shall be required at their hands. There is no reason to think that this punishment has yet been inflicted; but it will doubtless be executed by the battle of that great day of God Almighty mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation, and more particularly described in the fourteenth and nineteenth chapters, which have been considered, and in the foregoing prophecies of Isaiah, which have been now mentioned. The words which follow those transcribed above are, "In that day, the Lord with his sore, great, and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent, and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." The same event is here predicted, of which there is a prophecy in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, viz., of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, being laid hold of and bound and cast into the bottomless pit; and the same consequence of this with respect to the church is here foretold, as is described there, viz., the prosperity of it, by the special favor and presence of God. "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it day and night." While the battle is going on, and God is punishing the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, his people will be hid as in a secret chamber; but when it is over, they will become as a flourishing, fruitful vineyard, producing abundance of red wine, in consequence of the peculiar favor and care of Jesus Christ and the abundance of heavenly divine influences.

The thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters of Isaiah contain a prophecy of the millennium, and of the day of battle which will precede it, which will consist in the punishment of the world for their iniquity. "Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies. He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. For it is the day of the Lord's

vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. Strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

In the forty-first chapter of Isaiah, God, speaking to the church, and promising the good things and prosperity which were in store for it in the days of the millennium, says, "Behold, all they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with thee; they that war against thee shall be as nothing and as a thing of nought. Behold, I will make thee a new, sharp threshing instrument, having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."

In the forty-second chapter, God makes promises to his church, which are to be accomplished in their fulness in the days of the millennium, and speaks of the war and battle in which he will destroy his enemies, to open the way for the good things which was to be done for the church. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war. He shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace, I have been still, and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

The fifty-ninth and sixtieth chapters are wholly on the subject of the millennium. In the first fourteen verses of the fifty-ninth chapter, the great degree of wickedness of the world of mankind is described. And then God is represented

as greatly displeased, and rising to battle, to punish men for their evil deeds. "And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head, and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." And to this battle, this work of judgment and vengeance, succeeds the day of light and salvation to the church. Those who are left shall repent and humble themselves, and "fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob." It will be then said to the church, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The prophecy of the millennium goes on through the sixtieth, sixty-first, and sixty-second chapters.

There is a parallel representation of this battle in the sixty-third chapter, as executed by the same person, who is exhibited in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, riding forth to make war in righteousness, and fighting this same battle, in which the wicked then on earth will be slain. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?* This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him who treadeth in the wine vat? I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and the blood shalt be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold. Therefore, mine own arm brought sal-

* Bozrah was in the land of Edom. The Edomites were implacable enemies to the people of God, and are, in the prophecies of Isaiah and elsewhere, put for the enemies of God and his church in general, who shall be destroyed, as the Edomites were, of whom the Edomites and their destruction were a type.

vation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

The same thing is predicted in the sixty-sixth chapter. "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord who rendereth recompense to his enemies. And the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." These predictions of the slaughter and destruction of the wicked are here intermixed with promises of salvation and prosperity to the church. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye who love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. And when ye see this your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb."

A passage in the tenth chapter of Jeremiah seems to refer to the same event. The folly, idolatry, and great wickedness of the people and nations of the earth, is mentioned and described in the first part of the chapter, upon which the following prediction is uttered: "But JEHOVAH is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king. At his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under those heavens."

In the first part of the twenty-fifth chapter, there is a prophecy of the captivity of the Jews, and of other adjacent nations, by Nebuchadnezzar; and when their captivity during seventy years should be ended, Jeremiah fortells the ruin of Babylon, and the land of the Chaldeans. And the evil that was coming on the nations of the earth, which should attend the destruction of Babylon, is represented by ordering Jeremiah to take the wine cup of wrath, and cause all the nations of the earth to drink of it. And as the destruction of ancient Babylon, and the judgments which came on many other nations, was an eminent type of yet greater and more remarkable destruction of spiritual Babylon, and of all the nations of the earth, which will attend that, the prophecy is carried on

beyond the type, and looks forward to the antitype, which is common in Scripture prophecy; and expressions are used which cannot be applied to the former, to the type, in their full extent and meaning, but to the latter, the antitype, and therefore the prophecy is accomplished but in part, and in a lower degree in the former, but fully and most completely in the latter; therefore, the prophet goes on, and uses expressions towards the close of the prophecy, which refer chiefly to the battle in which antichrist and the nations of the earth will fall. Such are the following: "Therefore, prophecy thou against them all those words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation, he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." (Verse 30–33.) The prophet goes on to predict the evil that should come on the shepherds, and the principal of the flock, by whom are meant the kings and great men among the nations, who are to be brought down and destroyed in the battle, (verse 34–38,) which is agreeable to the fore-mentioned prophecy in Isaiah, (chap. xxiv. 21, 22,) and to the representation of the same battle in the Revelation. (Rev. xix. 16.)

There is another prophecy of this in the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah. Here the deliverance of the church from her oppressors and from all her sufferings and trouble is promised; which shall be attended with the utter overthrow and destruction of the wicked, and all her enemies. That this prophecy looks beyond the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and the evil that came on their enemies then, to the greater deliverance of the church from spiritual Babylon and the general destruction of the wicked, which shall attend it, of which the former was a type, is evident, not only from a number of expressions and promises which were not fully accomplished in the former, and have respect to the latter, but from the express promise that God will raise up David their king to reign over them, by whom must be meant Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and of whom David was an emi-

nent type. This will appear, by attending to the following passages: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be delivered out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee. Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee. Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart. In the latter days ye shall consider it." (Jer. xxx. 7–9, 11, 23, 24.)

In the Book of Daniel there is prophecy of the same event. "And at that time" (i. e., when antichrist is to be destroyed, which is predicted in the paragraph immediately preceding these words) "shall Michael stand up, the great Prince who standeth for the children of thy people," (that is, Jesus Christ, who will support and deliver his church.) "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time," (this is the time of the battle of that great day of God Almighty.) "And at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." This is the time of the deliverance of the church from the power of antichrist, and from all wicked men, her enemies, and of her entering upon the prosperous, happy state in which the saints will reign on the earth a thousand years.

The prophet Joel speaks of the same events. From the twenty-eighth verse of the second chapter of his prophecy is a prediction of the millennium, and the preceding evils that shall be inflicted on mankind. "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," etc. This prophecy began to be fulfilled when the Holy Spirit was first poured out after the ascension of Christ; but this, as has been before observed, was but the first fruits, and the prophecy will be fulfilled only in a very small part before the harvest shall come in the days of the millennium. At the same time he speaks of the great evils and terrible events which shall take place. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." The prophet goes on in the next chapter to speak more particularly on this

subject. "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

Judah and Jerusalem are put for the church of Christ, being a type of that, as has been observed. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and their return from it, is typical of the afflicted, suffering state of the church during the reign of antichrist, and the deliverance of it from this state on the fall of antichrist, and in the millennium. This is therefore meant when it is said, "In those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." When the children of Moab, Ammon, and Edom came with a great army combined together to destroy Judah, Jehoshaphat was directed to go forth with the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, and meet them; and had a promise that he should have no occasion to fight with them, but should stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, because the battle was not theirs, but God's. Accordingly they went out and stood still, and saw their enemies fall upon and destroy each other, until they were all wasted away. Jehoshaphat and his people went out to their camp, and found great riches, silver and gold, and much spoil, and they spent three days in gathering it; and, on the fourth day, they assembled in the valley to bless and praise the Lord, which was from that called "the valley of Berachah." This is the valley of Jehoshaphat. And to this story these words of the prophet Joel refer. (See 2 Chron. xx.) Moab, Ammon, and Edom, the enemies of Israel, were a type of the enemies of the church and people of God, under the gospel dispensation, among all nations. This battle, and their destruction of the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem in the valley of Jehoshaphat, was a type of the overthrow of all the enemies of Christ and his church, when they shall be gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. This prophecy, therefore, is a prediction of the same event which is described in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation. Here it is said, "I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people." That is, will punish and destroy them for their opposition to me and my church. There it is said, "The kings of the earth and of the whole world were gathered to the battle of that great day. And he gathered them together to a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Which passage has been before explained.

The prophet further enlarges on this subject in the following part of this chapter: "Proclaim me this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord shall also roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." (Joel iii. 9, etc.) Every one who attends to this passage will observe what a striking similitude there is between this description of a battle and that in the Revelation which has been considered. God is here represented as fighting the battle against all the heathen, and destroying multitudes on multitudes. All the heathen, even all nations, are gathered together, all armed for war, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there are cut off in this valley of decision. In the Revelation all the nations of the earth are gathered together to battle at Megiddo, typifying the same thing with the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there they are slain. God causes his mighty ones to come down. And John says, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war. And his name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven followed him upon white horses." Here there is a command to "put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for the wickedness is great." Much the same representation is made of this battle in the Revelation, (chap. xiv. 14, etc.,) which has been particularly mentioned already. The prophet Joel goes on to the end of his prophecy describing the happy state of the church which shall succeed this battle, which has never yet taken place, and is like other descriptions of the millennial state by the prophets. "Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountain shall drop

down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

The prophet Micah prophesied of Christ and his kingdom, in the extent and glory of it in the latter day, and of the destruction of the wicked men, and the nations of the world, in favor of the church of Christ, and in order to the prosperity of his people. All this is contained in the fifth chapter of his prophecy. "And He (i. e., Christ) shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide, for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he go through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lift up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard." (Verses 4, 8, 9, 15.)

The prophecy of Zephaniah has respect to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the succeeding happy and prosperous state of the church in the millennium. It has indeed a primary respect to the evils and punishment brought upon Jerusalem and the Jews by the Chaldeans, for their apostasy and idolatry; and to the calamities and destruction which came upon the nations at that time, and previous to the restoration of the Jews, and to their restoration from their captivity, and return to their own land, which were types of the much greater and more important events, in the last days, in which all nations will be more immediately concerned, and to which the prophecy has an ultimate and chief respect. It was fulfilled but in part, and in a small degree, in the former events, and will have the chief and complete accomplishment in the latter, as has been before observed concerning other prophecies of the same kind. Jerusalem, in her most pure state, when the statutes and ordinances which God had prescribed were in some good degree observed, was a type of the true church of Christ. Therefore, under this name, and that of Mount Zion and Israel, the prophets speak of the true church in all future ages. But Jerusalem, considered in her most corrupt state of apostasy, was a type of the false church of Rome, and of all Christian churches when they apostatize from the holy doctrines and precepts of the gospel. Therefore,

Christ is said to be crucified in the great city, by which is meant the apostate church of Rome, and all who partake of her corruptions, because he was crucified at Jerusalem, which was then a type of that great city, in her apostasy and enmity against Christ and his true church. (Rev. xi. 8.) The nations round about the land of Israel and Judea, and all those who at times afflicted and oppressed the visible people of God, and were enemies to them, were types of the enemies of the church of Christ, in the time of her affliction, especially of all the idolatrous nations and wicked men, who oppose the prosperity of the church, and are to be destroyed, in order to her deliverance and salvation. With these observations in view, this prophecy may be read, and the whole of it applied to the battle and events which will take place previous to the introduction of the millennium, predicted in the Revelation, under the seventh vial, and to the prosperity of the church which will then commence. Then it will have its full accomplishment, and many of the expressions in it, considered in their most natural and extensive meaning, cannot be accommodated to any events which have taken place, and are not yet fulfilled. Some of these will be now mentioned. The prophecy begins with the following words: "I will utterly consume all things from off the land,* saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast: I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from off the land, (the earth,) saith the Lord. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand; for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. The great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord. The mighty men shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver, nor their gold, shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, but the whole land (earth) shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them

* The word in the original, translated *land*, is the same which in other places in this prophecy, and in many other places in Scripture, is translated *earth*, and doubtless should have been so translated here, and in some other passages which will be transcribed.

that dwell in the land, (earth.) Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness; seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Therefore, wait upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey, for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, and all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." The parallel and likeness between this prophecy and that of the battle in the Revelation, is worthy of particular notice. This is called "the great day of the Lord, — the day of the Lord's wrath, — a day of distress and desolation, — the day that God will rise up to the prey, to *gather* the nations, and assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation and fierce anger." In the Revelation, the whole world were gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The words, THAT great day of battle, seem to have reference to some day which had already been made known, and undoubtedly refer to the great day of God's wrath, which is mentioned in the prophecy before us, and by the other prophets. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial (of wrath) into the air. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat on the horse; and the fowls were filled with their flesh." In this prophecy it is said, "The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests." In the Revelation, the fowls of heaven are invited to come to the supper of the great God to eat the flesh of kings, etc.

According to this prophet, when the nations and kingdoms of the world have been gathered, and God has poured upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, and all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy, the scene is changed, and the remnant which are left in the earth, the few afflicted and poor people, shall repent, and pray, and humble themselves before God, and return and put their trust in him alone; and God will return to them in a way of mercy, and build them up, and they shall be comforted, rejoice, and prosper. This is represented in the last chapter, from verse ninth to the end of the prophecy: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the

name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughters of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. I will also leave in thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee. Thou shalt not see evil any more," etc., to the end of the prophecy. This is set in much the same light in the Revelation, chapters nineteen and twenty. When the battle there described is over, the millennium is introduced.

There is a prophecy by the prophet Haggai to the same purpose with the foregoing. "Again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen, and I will overthrow the chariots, and those who ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee." (Hag. ii. 20–23.) Zerubbabel was a type of Christ; and what is here said of the type was not fulfilled in him, but is to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the antitype, when he shall reign on the earth, and his church fill the world, and "he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high." (Isa. lii. 13.) In order to this, the great changes are to take place represented here by shaking the heavens and the earth, and by overthrowing the throne and strength of all the kingdoms and nations, and their being destroyed by the sword; which is the battle represented in the Revelation by thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, and the falling of the cities of the nations.

The prophet Zechariah also speaks of these things. He prophesies of the millennium, and of the destruction of all the people and nations who oppose the interest of the church, as preceding the days of her prosperity, and introductory to it. "And in that day will I make Jerusalem [the true church of Christ] a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be *gathered together* against it. In that day, saith

the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zech. xii. 3, 4, 8, 9.) "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the cities shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." This is the gathering of the kingdoms and nations of the whole world unto the battle by the unclean spirits which go forth to corrupt the world, and arm them against God and his people, by the practice of all kinds of wickedness, by which the best part of the church will be greatly corrupted; and the saints will suffer very much, being besieged on all sides by very wicked men, mentioned in the Revelation, (Rev. xvi. 13, 14,) which has been explained.

The prophet goes on to describe the battle of that great day of God Almighty, which is mentioned in the Revelation: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." (Zech. xiv. 3, 12.)

Malachi prophesied of the millennium, and the preceding slaughter of the wicked, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in the following concise and striking language: "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. iv. 1–3.)

From the above detail, it appears that the prophecy in the Revelation of the millennium, and of the manner in which it

will be introduced, is agreeable to the ancient prophecies of these same events; that previous to this, the Christian world, and mankind in general, will become more corrupt in all kinds of wickedness; that God will rise out of his place, and come forth to do his work, his strange work, to punish the world for their wickedness, and manifest his high displeasure and anger with mankind, for their perverseness and obstinacy in rebellion against him, and in opposition to his church; that this is the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in which he will, by a course of various and multiplied calamities and sore judgments, greater and more general, and continued longer than any which have taken place before, reduce and destroy mankind, so that comparatively few will be left — an afflicted and poor people, who will repent and humble themselves before God, and trust in the mighty Savior, for whom he will appear in great mercy, and pour down the Holy Spirit on them and their offspring; and they will multiply and fill the world. And thus the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and the church will reign on earth a thousand years.

It appears reasonable and proper, that God should manifest his displeasure with the inhabitants of Christendom, and of the world, for their long-continued abuse of his goodness, and of all the means used with them to reclaim them, and their perseverance in their opposition to Christ and his people, and increasing in all kinds of wickedness, while he has been waiting upon them, even to long suffering, by inflicting on them severe and awful judgments, and remarkably fearful punishments, to vindicate the honor of his own name, and avenge his church and people, who have been so greatly injured, despised, and trampled upon; and that it may be made known by this, as well as in other ways, that the God of Christians, the God and Savior revealed in the Bible, is the true God. And this will give great instruction to those who shall be left, who will have a heart to perceive and understand. They will have before their eyes a lesson suited to teach them the exceeding depravity and wickedness of man; how real and dreadful is the divine displeasure and anger with sinners; how undone and utterly lost forever all men are without a Redeemer and Sanctifier, by whom they may be recovered from the power of sin and Satan, and obtain the forgiveness of their sins and the favor of God; how dependent they are on sovereign grace for all good, for every thing better than complete destruction, by which alone they are distinguished from those who persevere in their sins and perish. And all this will tend to guard them

against sin, to promote their repentance and humiliation, to lead them to more earnest, constant, and united prayer to God for mercy, than was ever exercised before by men, and to ascribe all the favors they shall receive, which will then be much more abundant than ever before, to the free, sovereign grace of God, and to give him the praise of all.

In the beginning of this section it was suggested, that by attending to the events which are to take place, according to Scripture prophecy, before the commencement of the millennium, further evidence would come into view, that this will not be much sooner or later than the beginning of the seventh millenary of the world. This evidence has been now produced. The sixth vial is now running, and probably began to be poured out before the end of the seventeenth century, and will continue to run a considerable part of the next century, under which the power of antichrist is to be greatly weakened, and the way prepared for his utter overthrow; and at the same time, the Christian world, and mankind in general, will be so far from reforming, that they will grow more and more corrupt in doctrine and practice, and greedily run into all manner of vice and wickedness, until they are prepared for the battle of that great day, and ripe to be cut down and destroyed by a series of divine judgments, which will be inflicted under the seventh vial, and will issue in the introduction of the millennium.

The River Euphrates has been drying up, and the way has been preparing, for near a century past, for the utter ruin of the pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, and the time of the utter overthrow of antichrist appears to be hastening on. But this is not accompanied with any reformation in that church, or in the Greek church, or in the Protestant churches in general; but very much to the contrary appears. Ignorance, error, and delusion, and open vice and wickedness abound, and are increasing, and infidelity is rapidly spreading in the Christian world. The unclean spirits, like frogs, appear to have gone forth to all the kings' courts and the great men in Christendom, and the greatest corruption and abominable vices are spread among them, and real Christianity is neglected, run down, and opposed; and the multitude in general, both learned and unlearned, are going the same way. Deism, and a multitude of errors which lead to it, and even to atheism, are increasing. A spirit of irreligion, selfishness, pride, and worldliness is exceeding strong and prevalent, producing all kinds of wickedness, and a strong and general opposition to true religion and the great truths and doctrines of the gospel. And the heathen world are no more disposed to become

Christians than they ever were; and the way to their conversion to Christianity appears to be more obstructed, and the few attempts that are made to Christianize any of them are generally unsuccessful; and Mahometans and Jews hate and oppose Christianity as much as ever they did, if not more, and are sinking farther down in stupidity, ignorance, infidelity, worldliness, and all kinds of vice.

It is certain that most of the evil things now mentioned have been found among the body of mankind, in a greater or less degree, in all ages; and the pious friends of God and true religion have complained of and lamented them; and it is probable that the representation now made will be considered by many only as the revival of the old complaint, by those who are of an illiberal, gloomy cast of mind, and wholly without foundation in truth and fact. But this opinion, though it should be generally imbibed and asserted with great confidence, will not be any evidence that the representation is not true and just, but it will rather serve to confirm it; for it is commonly, if not always the case, that in times of great degeneracy, and the prevalence of ignorance, error, and vice, they who are the greatest instances of it, and most sunk in darkness and delusion, are deluded in this also, and entertain a good opinion of themselves and of others who join with them, being ignorant of their true character. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and call evil good, and good evil. And while real Christianity and true virtue, founded upon principles of truth and genuine piety, are abandoned, opposed, and forsaken, they perceive it not, but think all is well, and much better than before; and they may undertake to *reform Christianity*, and think it is greatly reformed, when every doctrine and duty is excluded from it, which is contrary to the selfishness, pride, and worldly spirit of man, and little or nothing is left of it but the mere name, to distinguish it from the religion of infidels or heathen, and nothing to render it preferable to these.

An appeal must be made, in this case, from the judgment of those of this character, to those who are born of the Spirit of God, are created in Christ Jesus unto good work, by which they are become new creatures, and turned from the darkness of this world to marvellous light; who are not conformed to this world, but have overcome it, and are transformed by the renewing of their minds, so as to know and distinguish what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God which is revealed in the Scriptures. They who are thus spiritual, judge of all things respecting the doctrines and duties of Christianity, in some good measure, according to the truth. To such,

especially those of them who have a general knowledge of the state of religion in the Christian world, and of the deluge of ignorance, error, and vice with which it is overflowed, it is presumed the above description will not appear exaggerated, and that there are greater strides and swifter progress made in infidelity and irreligion, error and false religion, in vice and all kinds of wickedness, than have been ever known before; and that all these are more common, have a wider spread, and are carried to a higher degree at this time than in former ages, and threaten to bear down all truth and real Christianity before them; and that the appearance of things, in this respect, is just such as might be reasonably expected, when the unclean spirits like frogs, the spirits of devils, are gone forth with a license and design to spread their influence among men, and deceive and corrupt the whole world.

There is reason to conclude, from what has already taken place of this kind, and from the prophecy of these unclean spirits, that they have not yet finished their work; but that the world, especially that part of it called Christian and Protestant, will yet make greater and more rapid advances in all kinds of moral corruption and open wickedness, till it will come to that state in which it will be fully ripe, and prepared to be cut down by the sickle of divine justice and wrath; and it may take near half a century from this time for these evil spirits to complete their work and gather the world to this battle; but during this time, whether it be longer or shorter, and before the battle shall come on, there will probably be great and remarkable judgments, and sore, unusual and surprising calamities, in one place and another, suited to awaken and warn mankind, and lead them to fear God, repent, and reform; which being by most disregarded and abused, will become the occasion of greater hardness of heart and obstinacy, which will be a prelude and provocation to the battle of that great day in which mankind will be destroyed, in the manner and to the degree which has been described above. This battle, as has been before observed, will not be fought and finished at once; but, by a series of different and increasing calamities and sore punishments, mankind will be reduced and brought down, and every high thing levelled to the ground, in which the hand of God will be remarkably visible, and his arm of power and vengeance made bare; and it may take more than a century to effect all this in the wisest and best manner, so that it will not be finished till near the beginning of the seventh millenary of the world.

It has been observed, that while antichrist is coming down, and the way preparing for the utter extinction of the church

of Rome and all her appendages, the world in general, and especially the Christian world, will make swift advances in delusion and all kinds of wickedness, and infidelity will make great progress under the influence of the spirits of devils which are gone forth to the whole world; and it may be here observed, that the increase and spreading of this wickedness and spirit of infidelity will doubtless be the means of weakening and preparing the way for the overthrow of that church. The ten horns or kings, which shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, will do this from a selfish, worldly spirit, and under the influence of infidelity and opposition to all kinds of religion. And the prevalence of deism and atheism in popish countries and nations, which are the natural fruit and offspring of the abominable practices and tyranny of the anti-Christian church, has been the means of exposing the superstition and wickedness of that church, and weakening the papal hierarchy. And deists, and other wicked men, may be made the instruments of pulling down that anti-Christian fabric yet further, as the heathen Romans were of destroying the corrupt church of Israel. If so, the fall of the pope will be so far from implying a revival of true religion, that it may be attended with the contrary, viz., infidelity, immorality, and all kinds of wickedness, as the means of it, so far as it will be effected by the instrumentality of men.

When John is describing the vision under the sixth vial, of the unclean spirits like frogs, going forth to the whole world to gather them to the battle, he stops before he has finished the relation, and Jesus Christ himself speaks the following words: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garment, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. xvi. 15.) By which he warns those in particular, who shall live when this vial is poured out, of their danger of being seduced by those evil spirits, and those who are corrupted by them, and behaving unworthy of their Christian character, and sets before them the strongest motives to deter them from apostasy, and induce them to be faithful to him, to *watch and keep their garments*, to continue spiritually awake, and properly attentive to all those things which concern them as Christians; to their situation and state, their own exercises and conduct, to the cause of Christ, and the enemies with whom they are surrounded; to maintain their Christian profession, and act agreeably to it, in the exercise of all Christian graces; trusting in the great Captain and General, who only can save them, and his church, and waiting for him with a patient continuance in well doing. *He comes*

as a thief. The thief does not make his presence and designs known to any but those who are joined with him, being his friends, and engaged in the same design with him. So, though Christ be present with his church and people, and is in the midst of his enemies, having all men and devils in his hands, and ordering and conducting every thing that is done by them, in this time of the greatest degeneracy, and high-handed wickedness, and knows how to answer his own ends by it and them, and to protect his people, and bring the wheel over his enemies; yet, in this, his coming and presence, he is not seen or thought of by the corrupt, wicked world. They think nothing of his presence, and see not his hand. He is seen only by his friends, who are engaged in the same cause with him, who watch and keep their garments. They see his hand in all those things, behold him present, and doing his own work, and are protected from all evil by him, while the wicked fall into mischief, and are destroying themselves. And when he comes forth to the battle, and rises up to the prey, and to punish the world for their wickedness, the wicked will not see him, they will not know their danger, or believe he is come, or will come, till evil falls upon them, and it is too late to escape. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) And they only are safe who watch and keep their garments, and see and adore his hand and presence in all his works of terror and wrath. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." (Ps. ii. 10–12.)

It is of the greatest importance to Christians, who live at this day, and those who shall live in the time when the battle shall come on, that they should attend and discern the signs of the times, and watch and keep their garments, as this is the only way to be safe and happy. Our Lord gave the same direction and command, as to substance, when he was on earth, with reference to these same events. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke xxi. 34–36.)

It will probably be suggested, that the representation of

such a dark scene, and evil time, to take place before the millennium will come, is matter of great discouragement, and tends to damp the spirits and hopes of Christians, and to discourage them from attempting to promote it, or praying for it, especially as it is set so far off from our day, so that none in this or the next generation are like to see it.

To such suggestions it is easy to reply, —

1. If it be true, and clearly and abundantly foretold, that such evils are to take place, before the prosperous state of the church comes on, it is proper and desirable that all should know it, and attend to it, and it cannot be of any disadvantage to any to know the truth in this case, but the contrary. This is revealed to the church for the instruction and benefit of Christians, that they may be informed and warned of what is coming, and be prepared for it, and not be disappointed in their expectations, and surprised when it shall take place; but when they see these things coming to pass, their faith may be strengthened, and they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that the redemption, the deliverance and prosperity of the church, draweth near.

2. These evils, both natural and moral, however undesirable and dreadful, in themselves, are necessary for the greatest good of the church of Christ, and to introduce the millennium in the best manner, and there will be then, and forever, more holiness, joy, and happiness than if these evils had never taken place. In this view, they are kind and merciful dispensations to the church. The apostles and prophets, and all the inhabitants of heaven, are represented as rejoicing in the evils, the punishments and destruction of the enemies of Christ and his church. (Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1–6.) The affliction and servitude of the children of Israel in Egypt, and the wickedness, oppression, and cruelty exercised towards them by Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the successive calamities and punishments brought on them by the hand of God, and their final overthrow and destruction in the Red Sea, were an unspeakable advantage to the former, and afforded matter of joy and praise. Therefore, Christians may now not only acquiesce, by even rejoice in these events, as ordered by God for wise ends, and necessary, in order to the greatest display of his righteousness and goodness, and to promote the best good and greatest happiness of his church.

3. God revealed to Abraham the evils which were coming on his posterity in Egypt, previous to their deliverance and prosperity, and the wickedness and punishment of the Egyptians; not to discourage him, and sink his spirit, but to support and animate him, and strengthen his faith, and this did not

damp his joy, but, in the view of the whole, he rejoiced. And Jesus Christ foretold to his disciples the great evils which were coming on them, upon the Jews, the church, and the world, not to discourage and deject them, but that they might be forewarned, and expect them, so as not to be disappointed when they came, but have their faith confirmed, and possess their souls in patience when the dark scene should come on; and that they might be encouraged and rejoice, considering these events as tokens that their deliverance was at hand. He therefore said unto them, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke xxi. 28.) This may be applied to Christians now. While you see the world gathering to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and view this battle near at hand, lift up your heads and rejoice, that the church has got so near the end of darkness and affliction, and that the happy day of her deliverance and prosperity is so near at hand.

4. As to the distance of that happy day of salvation from this time, two hundred years, or near so many, will pass off before it will arrive, according to the calculation which has been made from Scripture, so that none, now on the stage of life, will live to see and enjoy it on earth. But much may be done by Christians who live in this age to promote its coming on in the proper time, by prayer, and promoting the interest of religion, and the conversion of sinners. For that good day would not come unless the cause of Christ be maintained to that time, and sinners be converted to keep up the church, and prevent the total extinction of it. In order to this, thousands must be converted, and there must be a succession of professing and real Christians down to that day. The doctrines, institutions, and duties of Christianity must be maintained, and there will doubtless be remarkable revivals of religion in many places, and knowledge will increase among true Christians, and there will be advances made in the purity of doctrines and worship, and all holy practice, by bringing all these nearer to the standard of the holy Scriptures. And the churches will be formed into a greater union with each other, being more and more conformed to the divine pattern contained in the Bible. Here then is work enough to do, by those who desire and are looking for such a day, to prepare the way for it, and it may be introduced in the proper time, and there is no want of encouragement to do it, even in this view, to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they may know that their labor will not be in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

And Christians may now have a great degree of enjoyment of that day, and joy in it, though they do not expect to live on earth till it shall come. True Christians are disinterested and benevolent to such a degree, that they can enjoy and rejoice in the good of others, even those who may live many ages hence, and in the good and prosperity of the church, and the advancement of the cause and kingdom of Christ in this world, though they should not live to see it. The stronger their faith is that this good day is coming, and the clearer and more constant view they have of it, and the more desirable it appears to them that there should be such a time, the higher enjoyment and greater joy they will have in it, and in the prospect of it. Thus Abraham looked forward by his faith, and saw this day of Christ, when all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him, and derived great comfort and joy in this prospect. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." (John viii. 56.) Christians know that it will come on in the best time, as soon as it can be introduced by infinite wisdom and goodness; that there is no delay, but "God will hasten it in his time." In this sense Christ will come *quickly* to set up his kingdom in the whole world. He is on his way, coming as fast and as soon as he can, consistent with infinite wisdom. He is preparing the way, and ordering every thing in the best manner, so as in the most proper time to reign with his church on earth, and no time is lost. And what Christian can desire that it should be sooner, or before this time? Is it not enough that Jesus Christ has undertaken it, and will bring it on in the best manner, and the fittest time? And must not this give joy to every real Christian?

It is further to be observed, that though the Christians who live at this day will not see the millennium come while they are in the body on earth, yet they will see and enjoy it, when it shall come, in a much higher degree than they could do were they living on earth, or than those who will live on earth at that day. The powers, knowledge, and views of the spirits of the just made perfect are greatly enlarged in heaven, and they have a more clear and comprehensive view of the works of God, and a more particular knowledge of what is done in this world, especially of what relates to the work of redemption, the salvation of sinners, and the prosperity of the church and cause of Christ. There is joy in the presence of the angels over *one sinner* that repenteth. The spirits of the just made perfect are with the angels, and must know all that passes in their presence, and must rejoice in such an event, as much or more than they. How great must be their joy then,

when whole nations, yea, all the world, become true penitents, and they see and know this, and what is implied in it, unspeakably to better advantage, and more clearly than any can do who shall be then on earth!

The more Christians labor and suffer on earth in the cause of Christ, and the more they desire, pray for, and promote his coming and kingdom in this world, the more they will enjoy it in heaven when it shall take place, and the greater will be their joy and happiness. And it will be unspeakably more and greater in heaven than if they were in bodies on earth. Who, then, can reasonably desire to live in this world merely to see and enjoy the happy day of the millennium?

On the whole, it is hoped that it does appear from what has been said in this dissertation, that there will be a thousand years of prosperity of the church of Christ in this world; that this is abundantly foretold and held up to view in the Bible; that this will be about the seventh millenary of the world; that it will be a most happy and glorious day, in which the Christian dispensation shall have its proper and full effect on earth, in the salvation of men, to which all the preceding times and events are preparatory; that the degeneracy and increasing prevalence of ignorance, error, and wickedness now in the world, especially in Christendom, is preparing for and hastening on the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in which mankind will be punished, and the greatest part then on earth destroyed, and then the millennium will be introduced; that this is an important and pleasing subject, suited to support and comfort Christians in all the dark and evil days which precede it, and to excite them to earnest, constant, united prayer for this coming of Christ, and patient waiting for him, and to constant exertions in all proper ways, to promote his interest and kingdom in the world.

After the thousand years of the reign of Christ and his church on earth, "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Rev. xx. 7–9.) In these words there is reference to what is said of Gog and Magog, in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel, which prophecy there is reason to think is not to be understood literally, but in a figurative sense; as no events have ever taken place answerable to this representation, if

taken in a literal sense. The prophecy of Gog and Magog may be considered as having reference to two events which are to take place at different times, and are similar in some respects, and differ in others, viz., the great and general corruption and wickedness of mankind, and their punishment and destruction, which will precede the millennium which has been described in this section; and the apostasy and wickedness of mankind at the end of the millennium, and the remarkable overthrow and destruction of them when Christ shall come to judgment, predicted in the words which have been now transcribed. Some things said of Gog and Magog, of their designs, doings, and their punishment, and a number of expressions in that prophecy, are more applicable to the former of these events than to the latter, and some more applicable to the latter than to the former, and the whole cannot be well applied to one, exclusive of the other; but in both the prophecy is completely fulfilled. Both these events respect wicked men, who have arrived to a great degree of obstinacy and wickedness; and they are both gathered together by the agency and deception of Satan, let loose for that end; and they are both gathered together to battle against Christ and his church, and are destroyed in the battle.

This prophecy is figurative. It is not to be supposed that all this great multitude will be gathered together into one place, or that the church will be encamped together in one spot on earth, or collected in one city; but the gathering of the wicked means their being abandoned to infidelity and a very great degree of wickedness, in opposition to the church of Christ and true religion, and being disposed to extirpate these from the face of the earth. In this sense, the wicked will be gathered together to battle before the millennium, by the spirits of devils, or Satan, who will go forth to the whole world for that end, as has been explained. The church will become small, and surrounded and assaulted by the wicked on every side, and ready to be swallowed up, and totally destroyed by them.

It has been a question from whence this multitude of people here called Gog and Magog should come, after the church of Christ and true religion had prevailed in the world a thousand years. Some have supposed that a number of people, and perhaps whole nations, would live in some corner of the earth, during the time of the millennium, without partaking of any of the blessings of it; but will continue in a state of heathenism and wickedness all that time, till at length they will multiply so much as to be able to rise in opposition to the church, and destroy it, were they not prevented by the miraculous interposition of Heaven. And many have supposed that this

fact is inconsistent with all the inhabitants of the world being real Christians and eminently holy in the time of the millennium. But this supposed difficulty may be easily solved, and the general and great apostasy accounted for, consistent with the supposition that in the millennium all mankind will be real Christians. Near the end of the thousand years, the divine influences which produced and continued the universal and eminent holiness in the millennium may be in such a measure withheld, as that real Christians will, in their exercises and conduct, sink much below what had taken place before, and indulge a careless and worldly spirit to a great and sinful degree, and become more and more negligent of their duty, especially with respect to their children, and be really guilty of breaking covenant with God in this important point. In consequence of this, their children will not be regenerated and converted, but grow up in a state of sin, real enemies to God and to the truth. And as the world will be then full of people, it will in this way soon become full of wicked men, and the church will be very small. And those who will grow up under the power of sin and Satan, in the face of all that light, truth, and holiness which had taken place through the millennium, and in opposition to it, will naturally arrive to a great and amazing degree of hardness and obstinacy in sin, and become a far more guilty and perverse generation of men than ever existed before, and will be greater enemies to truth and righteousness and the church of Christ; and, consequently, will be united and engaged to banish all these from the earth. The world will have more wicked persons in it than ever before, and all these much more sinful, and engaged in all kinds and ways of opposition to Christ and his cause and people. The church will be on the brink of ruin, just ready to sink and be swallowed up, and the appearance and coming of Christ will be less believed, expected, or thought of than at any other time. Then Christ will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God and obey not the gospel.

This apostasy and great wickedness of so many millions of mankind, the number of whom will be as the sand of the sea, and their consequent misery, is an awful dispensation indeed, and is, in itself, an evil infinitely beyond the comprehension of man. But there is the clearest evidence and the greatest certainty that this instance of evil, as well as all other evil which precedes it, and will succeed it, though it will be endless, will, by the overruling hand of God, be productive of overbalancing good, and is necessary in order to effect the greatest possible good to the universe. "*Surely* the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou

restrain." (Ps. lxxvi. 10.) This event will serve to set the total depravity and the strong propensity of man to the greatest degree of wickedness in a more clear and striking light than it had been or perhaps could be before. That man should apostatize, and so soon arrive to such a high degree of wickedness, after all the light and holiness, and the wonderful goodness of God to man, displayed in the millennium, and in opposition to all this light and grace, and in the greatest abuse of it, join in rebellion against God, and trample on his authority, truth, and goodness, contrary to the admonitions and warnings from the Word of God; and all faithful ministers and Christians will make a new discovery, and greater than was ever made before, of fallen human nature, and of the great and desperate evil that is in the heart of man, and that it is utterly incurable by any means that can possibly be used, short of the almighty energy of the Spirit of God, by which the heart is renewed, and consequently of the guilt and infinite ill desert of man; which discovery will be of great advantage to the church and kingdom of Christ forever, and necessary for the greatest happiness and glory of it, and the highest honor of the Redeemer.

And this will make from fact a new and greater discovery of the absolute dependence of man on the grace and Spirit of God, to prevent his greatest wickedness and endless destruction, and to form him to holiness and happiness; and of the great and sovereign grace of God in converting and saving lost man, and in bringing on such a wonderful degree of holiness and happiness, and continuing it a thousand years; and that this is all to be ascribed to the sovereign power and grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. When all men shall be righteous and holy from generation to generation for a thousand years, and all the children which shall be born in that time shall appear to be pious and holy as soon as they begin to act, and persevere in this to the end of life, the appearance will be, that mankind are now grown better, and that the evil nature of man is not so great, but he is naturally inclined to obedience and holiness. The sudden and great apostasy which will take place will take off this appearance, and show that the heart of man is naturally as full of evil as ever it was, and that all the good and holiness of the millennial state was the effect of the power of the Spirit of God, and to be wholly ascribed to the infinite, sovereign grace of God; and this discovery will be remembered by the redeemed forever, and improved to the glory of God, to the praise of rich, sovereign grace, and consequently to their own eternal advantage.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." AMEN.

AN INQUIRY

CONCERNING THE

FUTURE STATE OF THOSE WHO DIE IN THEIR SINS;

OR,

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT

CONSISTENT WITH

DIVINE JUSTICE, WISDOM, AND GOODNESS.

"O that they were wise, that they understood this,
that they would consider their latter end!" —JEHOVAH.

INTRODUCTION.

Man is not only made capable of looking forward, but is strongly inclined to do it, and cannot avoid a greater or less degree of thought and concern about futurity, and the good or evil which he shall be the subject of hereafter. These are the objects of all his hopes and fears, and afford great scope for the continual exercise of them, and those affections which attend them; by which he is influenced, more or less, in all his conduct. And though most of mankind appear to confine their prospects chiefly or altogether within the narrow limits of this life, and feel little concerned about that which may take place after they leave this world, yet who is there that will not pronounce this very unreasonable, on the least serious reflection, and consider it as an evidence, among a thousand others, of human depravity?

We are certainly capable of existence in a future state, — yea, of continuing to exist without end, — and there is nothing in reason or experience to render this improbable, but much to induce us to believe that this present life is only preparatory to our existing in an endless state hereafter, and that we shall be happy or miserable there, according as we are the objects of the favor of our Maker, or not. Therefore, this — our future existence — is the most interesting and important to us, and demands our greatest and most serious attention and concern, and the highest exercise of our hopes and fears.

It is true, indeed, that when we turn our thoughts to this subject, we at once feel that reason alone will never enable us

to determine, without hesitation, many important inquiries about a future state; and that mankind would be left in great and most undesirable uncertainty and darkness respecting all things that relate to the invisible world, without some other assistance; and that it is, therefore, greatly desirable, and of infinite importance, that God, who is able, should assist man by a particular revelation of his will and design with regard to a future state. And this might not only be a ground of hope that God may thus favor his creature, man, — to whom he grants so many favors in his providence, and shows himself propitious, — but affords good reason to conclude he has actually given such a revelation, and may serve to excite our gratitude to God, who find ourselves in actual possession of a revelation which bears every mark, and is attended with all the evidence, of its divine original that can be desired, or even conceived; and ought to lead us to feel the great obligations we are under to attend to it with a serious and honest mind, ready to receive the dictates of Heaven on this important point, whatever we may find to be revealed.

All who admit the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be from God, agree that it is there revealed that they who shall be redeemed from sin, and be made happy by Christ the Savior, shall have an unceasing existence, in perfect happiness, in his everlasting kingdom; but they have differed much about the future existence and punishment of those who do not embrace the gospel in this life, but live and die in their sins. Most who have lived in the Christian world have professed to believe that it is as clearly revealed that the latter shall exist forever in endless punishment as that the former shall be happy without end; but a number have denied this. Some have expressed a confidence that all the wicked shall cease to exist, and be annihilated, either immediately upon the death of the body, or after they have continued in misery and been punished during a proper length of time. Others are confident it can be proved from Scripture that all the human race will be finally and eternally happy. Some of these allow that they who die in their sins will be punished for a season, even after the day of judgment, as an effectual discipline to bring them to repentance; but others confidently

assert that all will be happy at the day of judgment, and some of these hold that all do enter into perfect blessedness when they leave this world.

The design of the following inquiry is to assist all who are desirous to know the truth, in examining this point in the light of the sacred oracles, and to help them to see the reasonableness of what is there revealed concerning it, and to answer the most material objections that have been made against it. There seems to be a special call for this now, as the denial of endless punishment has been more open and common of late, and the doctrine of universal salvation, though in different forms, is zealously espoused by many.

We have no reason to think the difference of sentiment on so important and interesting a point, among those who profess to form their different opinions from divine revelation, is owing to any defect in the Bible, or because the truth respecting it is not revealed with sufficient plainness. This diversity and opposition of sentiment, therefore, must be wholly owing to the faulty prejudices and evil biases in the minds of men, which indispose them to believe the truth, and lead them to misunderstand and pervert the Holy Scriptures, even where that which is revealed is very plain and decisive.

Whoever attends to the different and opposite sentiments on almost every point in religion which have been and are embraced, even by those who have the Bible in their hands and appeal to that for the support of what they believe, will have sufficient reason to determine that no standing revelation can be given from heaven, however perfect, plain, and decisive, that cannot be misunderstood and perverted by men of corrupt and perverse minds. If divine revelation be so formed that they cannot fail of seeing every important truth contained in it who give suitable attention to it, and have a meek, humble, honest mind, it is suited to answer all the desirable ends of a revelation, however it may be abused and perverted by those who do not love the truth, in support of the most gross and hurtful errors.

We, therefore, have all desirable encouragement to search the Scriptures, that we may learn what will be the certain consequence of living and dying in sin — what will be the

punishment of the wicked in a future state, as it is certainly there plainly revealed; and however men have differed, — and many have run into great and dangerous errors on this point, — we may have the comfortable assurance that we shall know what is the truth respecting this important article, if with meekness and impartiality we be ready to receive and love what God has revealed. But as many have failed of this, and have come to the Bible full of prejudices against the truth there revealed, and disposed to believe nothing contained in divine revelation which is not agreeable to their corrupted minds, — and so have not believed the truth, and have been justly given up to strong delusion, to believe a lie, and we are liable to the same sin and dreadful consequence, — let us therefore take heed to ourselves, and humbly, with earnestness and constancy, look to the Father of lights, that he may give us an honest heart, and so open our minds to understand the Scriptures that we may find the truth, after which we are now inquiring, and have our hearts established in it, and be directed to improve it to his glory, our own eternal good, and the benefit of our neighbor.

AN INQUIRY

CONCERNING THE FUTURE STATE OF THOSE WHO DIE IN THEIR SINS.

SECTION I.

The Holy Scriptures teach that the Wicked will be punished in the future State.

Much is said in the Scripture concerning the evil and punishment that will come on the wicked in a future state. This observation will be sufficiently illustrated by the following passages, though they do not contain all that is said on this subject in the inspired writings.

The evils which God brings on men in this world for their sins, and his often destroying them in a terrible manner, as a testimony of his displeasure with them, many instances of which we find recorded in sacred writ, do forebode the future punishment of the wicked, and may well be considered as a standing evidence and admonition of this.

The destruction of the old world by the flood, when only one family was saved, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the deliverance of Lot, are considered by Christ and his apostles as emblems or types of the destruction or punishment of the wicked in the future state, and the salvation of God's people. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, etc., until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. xxvi. 37, 38.) "For if God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of

Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample to those that after should live ungodly, and delivered just Lot; the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (2 Pet. ii. 5, etc.) Here the apostle makes these destructions of the wicked an argument that the ungodly in general will be punished in the future state, and after the day of judgment; and, therefore, teaches us to consider them in this light, and by them to learn the distinction God will make between the godly and unjust at the last day. In the same light St. Jude considers the destruction of Sodom. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." In this view, the Bible is full of admonitions of the certain punishment of all that live ungodly, when the righteous shall be completely delivered and enter into everlasting life. A contrary doom is pointed out for the wicked.

When God reveals a Savior by Moses, and promiseth he shall come into the world in the character of a prophet, he adds the following words: "And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. xviii. 19.) That is, he shall answer to me for it, and I will deal with him, and punish him accordingly. Therefore, when St. Peter quotes this passage, he expresses the true sense in the following words: "He shall be destroyed from among his people." This is an early declaration that rejection of Christ in this world would prove fatal to men; and that he would be so far from saving all men, that they who shall disregard him in this life will certainly be punished with a peculiarly aggravated destruction.

We find an awful threatening of God to the wicked, who continue his incorrigible enemies through this life, under all the methods taken to reclaim them, in Deut. xxxii. 35, etc.: "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For I lift my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgments, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy."

The punishment here threatened to the obstinately wicked

is to be inflicted in a future state; for no such distinction between God's people and his enemies, as is represented in this passage of Scripture, does take place in this world; besides, the first words of this paragraph are quoted by St. Paul, (Heb. x. 30,) and he applies them to the future punishment of the wicked, of which he is there speaking. "For ye know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord." And he then adds, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." In the last words, "the living God," he evidently has reference to those in the passage above recited, "I lift my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever." Which certainly implies that God lives so as to be able to punish the wicked in a future state; so that they are so far from getting out of his hands when they die, that then, in a peculiar sense, they fall into his hands, to suffer the vengeance threatened; and may it not be justly observed here, that, though the endless duration of this punishment is not expressly asserted in the threatening, yet it seems to be plainly intimated, when Jehovah introduces himself as living forever, to express his determination and ability to render vengeance and recompense to his enemies; and that he will do this as long as he liveth? But this is to be more particularly considered hereafter. And perhaps it will appear, when properly considered, that it is necessary that God should live forever, in order to render vengeance and a proper and full recompense to his enemies; that is, a punishment equal to their desert.

Job and his friends speak much of the evil end and punishment of the wicked, as certain and inevitable, being the objects of God's displeasure and wrath; and at the same time mention the security and happiness of the righteous in his favor and protection. (See Job iv. 8, 9, 20, 21; viii. 13–22; xi. 13–20; xv. 20–35; xviii. 5–21; xx. 4–29.) In this last-quoted passage are the following words: "Knowest thou not this of old, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish forever, like his own dung. His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust. When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and a bow of steel shall strike him through. It is drawn and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall; terrors are upon him. A fire not blown shall consume him. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him. This is the portion of a wicked

man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God." Job himself agrees with his friends in this, that the wicked are the objects of God's wrath, and shall be punished. They differed on this head only in applying this doctrine. They considered outward afflictions in this world as included in the punishment of the wicked, and therefore concluded that they who suffered greatly by the hand of God in this life were ungodly, and the objects of divine displeasure, and that God would protect and save the truly pious from such evils in this world. He insisted that the distinction between the righteous and the wicked did not take place and appear in God's dispensations and dealings with them in his providence in this life, therefore the good and evil by which they were to be distinguished must and would take place in a future state only. He says that innocence and righteousness will not secure a person from afflictions in this life, and from death, in common with the wicked. "This is one thing, therefore I said it, he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; if not, where and who is he?" (Job ix. 22, etc.) He observes, that the wicked live long and prosper in their wickedness in this world. "The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure, into whose hand God bringeth abundantly." (Job. xii. 6.) "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, and mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them," etc. (Job. xxi. 7–9.) Yet he speaks of the punishment and destruction of the wicked as certain and inevitable, which, therefore, must take place in a future state. Speaking of the wicked, he says, "They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." (Job xxi. 18–20.) "Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? This is the portion of the wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered," i. e., he shall die, but shall not be gathered and received to the society of the blessed, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were at their death. "He openeth his eyes, and he is not.

Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and a storm hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand." (Job xxvii. 7, etc.) "Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?" (Job xxxi. 3.)

Job and his friends lived in the days of Moses, or before, and by them we learn what was the doctrine respecting the future punishment of the wicked, received and taught by the people of God at that time. They represent it as certain and very dreadful, and give not the least hint that it shall ever end, but the whole they say rather imports the contrary. They represent the wicked as deprived of all his hopes, when he dies, which surely cannot be true, if he shall be immediately happy, or happy forever, though punished for a time. What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? God shall cast upon him, and not spare. Yea, he shall perish forever.

The Book of Psalms, in which the future state is brought more fully into view than in the preceding part of Scripture, is full of threatenings to sinners, and declarations of their punishment in the world to come. This will be sufficiently evident, by reciting the following passages, out of many more which are found in those sacred writings: —

In the first Psalm the truly pious are pronounced blessed, and the ungodly are cursed, as those who shall be condemned at the day of judgment, separated from the righteous, and utterly perish and be destroyed. "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." (Ps. xi. 6.) This is not their portion in this life, therefore it must refer to their punishment in a future state, which is represented as very dreadful. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger. The Lord shall swallow them up, and the fire shall devour them. Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate." (Ps. xxi. 8, 9; xxxiv. 21.) When the Psalmist has related the trouble and perplexity he had experienced, by observing the apparent prosperity and happiness of the wicked in this world, he says,

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their *end*. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee." (Ps. lxxiii. 17, etc.) All this evil, wretchedness, and destruction, in which the wicked perish, is what must be inflicted on them after death, in the invisible world; for these are they who prosper in this world, and die like other men, as death is common to both the righteous and wicked. Their *end*, therefore, which he then understood and described, must be the punishment which comes on the wicked in consequence of death, or leaving this world. If the wicked were happy as soon as they leave this world, this passage would be altogether unintelligible, yea, a perfect deception. And how can there be any end to this destruction and punishment, when this itself is said to be their *end?* If this destruction were to come to an end, and they, after all, must be eternally happy, how can this be called *their end?* When St. Paul speaks of some whose *end* is destruction, must he not intend a destruction which is inconsistent with their eternal happiness? For if he meant a destruction consistent with their having eternal life, such a destruction is not *their end*, but infinitely far from it, and everlasting life would be *their end*, and there would be no propriety or truth in the distinction which he makes. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Rom. vi. 21, 22.)

"In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever. But thou, Lord, art most high forevermore. For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity; and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off. His righteousness (who feareth the Lord) endureth forever: his horn shall be exalted with honor. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved: he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away; the desire of

the wicked shall perish." (Ps. lxxv. 8; xcii. 7–9; xciv. 23; cxii. 9, 10.) This distinction between the righteous and the wicked is not made in this life, therefore it must be made in the future state; and then this threatening shall be inflicted on the wicked. "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God." (Ps. cxxxix. 19.) This does not intend God's taking them out of the world by death, for in this sense he slays the righteous as much as the wicked, but it must intend a punishment after the death of the body, or the second death, or it can have no meaning. This is evidently opposed to what David desires God would grant unto him. "Lead me in the *way everlasting*." (Ps. cxxxix. 24.) "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy." (Ps. cxlv. 20.) This also must refer to a future state, for both they who love God, and his enemies, are equally preserved in this life, and destroyed by dying. This destruction of the wicked is that which is so often spoken of as their portion and end in the future state.

In the writings of Solomon, especially in his Proverbs, we find the future punishment and misery of the wicked often mentioned, and generally in contrast to the safety and happiness of the righteous. The following instances, out of many more that might be mentioned, will be sufficient to illustrate this remark. "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, and I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." (Pr. i. 24, etc.) "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray." (Pr. v. 22.) "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright; but destruction to the workers of iniquity." (Pr. x. 28.) "When a wicked man dieth his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth." (Pr. xi. 7.) What words could more fully express the misery of the wicked after death, or assert more strongly that he shall then

be deprived of all good, which is the object of hope, and fall into absolute despair? And how inconsistent are such assertions as these with his surviving this misery, and, after all this, obtaining eternal happiness! How can his hope perish when he dies, if he knows, or has the least hope, that he shall be yet eternally happy? Solomon says, "Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; for surely there is an end, and thy expectation shall not be cut off." (Pr. xxiii. 17, 18.) These words illustrate those last quoted. If this be a promise to him that feareth God, that he shall be happy after death, and that without end, as it certainly is, then the other is a threatening of the contrary, which is misery without end. If both the righteous and the wicked shall be happy together forever, how is it possible to be true, that the hope of the latter shall be cut off and perish when he dies, and directly the contrary be true of the former?

"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." (Pr. xi. 21.) "The wicked are overthrown, and are not; but the house of the righteous shall stand." (Pr. xii. 7.) "Evil pursueth sinners; but to the righteous good shall be repaid." (Pr. xiii. 21.) "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death. (Pr. xiv. 32.) "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Pr. xvi. 4.) "God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness." (Pr. xxi. 12.) "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times," or years, "and his days be prolonged, yet, surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God; but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he feareth not before God." (Ec. viii. 12, 13.)

It is certain that all these evils which are denounced against the wicked, by which they are to be distinguished from the righteous, are inflicted, not in this life, but in a future state; because the same inspired writer says there is no such distinction in this life. "No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not. As is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." (Ec. ix. 1, 2.)

The prophet Isaiah speaks much of the dreadful evil and unavoidable punishment that will attend the wicked in the future state. He seems to sum up and declare the whole

import of his commission and prophecy. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." (Isa. iii. 10, 11.) Here the righteous and the wicked are set in opposition to each other, with respect to the fruit and end of what they do in this world. And if what is promised to the former be endless life and happiness, can the threatening of the contrary to the latter be any thing but directly the opposite — endless misery and punishment? That punishment must be very dreadful which is a full reward of all that is done in this life, that is, answerable to his ill desert; and doubtless will be without end, which will be particularly considered in the sequel.

"Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden down by it." (Isa. xxviii. 16, etc.) This passage respects Christ, and points out the certain opposite consequences of believing on him and rejecting him. To him who believeth, the most perfect security from all evil is promised. He shall be out of the reach of the rising floods of water, and the overflowing scourge. But all the rest shall have judgment without mercy, and be punished according to their crimes, and swept away by the irresistible billows and overflowing scourge of the divine vengeance and wrath. What a striking, awful representation is this of the future punishment of the wicked! "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. xxxiii. 14.) How can this representation be just or true if a most dreadful punishment, yea, an endless one, does not await all those sinners and hypocrites who sustain this character to the end of life? "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversies of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever." (Isa. xxxiv. 8–10.)

The prophet, in this passage and in the preceding verses, is representing the dreadful punishment that shall come on the enemies of God and his church when he shall rise up to take vengeance on them, and recompense them for their evil deeds. And when he brings into view the great evils and awful destruction that shall come on the enemies of God's people upon the introduction of the happy state of the church in this world, he extends this view to their misery in the future state, in which their punishment shall issue and be completed. This is not the only instance of this kind, but we often find in the prophecies, both of the prosperity and happiness of God's church and people, and the overthrow and punishment of his enemies, that the prophetic vision connects the complete and eternal happiness of the former with their happy state in this world, and includes both in the same figurative representation, and in the same manner represents the punishment of the latter. And that this passage hath reference to the future misery of the wicked, is further evident from the plain allusion to it in the Revelation, when speaking of the future and dreadful misery of the enemies of God and his people. "And they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night." (Rev. xiv. 11.)

In the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, the last verse, there is another threatening of future evil to the wicked: "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks. Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Who is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." (Isa. lxiii. 1–6.) Here Christ is represented as pouring vengeance on all his enemies, while he redeems and saves his church. This is exactly agreeable to several passages already quoted, and to the general current of Scripture. The acceptable year of the Lord is also the day of vengeance of our God. (Isa. lxi. 2.) And

agreeably to the Scripture now under consideration, it is said of Christ, "He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 15.) And we are told by Christ himself, and by St. Paul, how and when this shall be completely done. "Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." (Matt. xxv. 41.) "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7, etc.)

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." (Isa. lxvi. 23, 24.)

This prophet had dwelt much on the certain overthrow and destruction of all the enemies of the church, and the prosperity and happiness to which that shall be brought in the latter days, and now concludes his prophecy in these remarkable words, which, in figurative language, represent the eternal state of the church, and of her enemies, which are destroyed and punished for their transgression. Dead bodies which are not buried soon become very nauseous and abominable, until they are wholly consumed by worms or by fire. Here the greatness and duration of the punishment of these transgressors is set forth by their bodies, though putrid and very offensive, continuing unconsumed by the worm or by the fire, and remaining food for the one and fuel for the other, without any end or diminution. And this is to take place in the sight of all the inhabitants of heaven, and they shall have it fully in view while they worship and praise God. This is exactly agreeable to other passages of Scripture, especially Rev. xiv. 10, "And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, *in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." "And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever." (Rev. xix. 1–3.) No similitude, no words could be chosen that would, in a more determinate and striking manner, set forth the dreadfulness and perpetuity of the future punishment of the wicked than

these used by the prophet Isaiah. For this reason, doubtless, our Savior alludes to this passage repeatedly when he would set this awful subject in the most awakening point of light. But this will be more particularly considered hereafter.

By the prophet Jeremiah, God fixeth an awful curse on those who refuse to trust in him, and pronounceth every one blessed that trusteth in the Lord. "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters," etc. (Jer. xvii. 5, etc.)

The curse here pronounced on the unbeliever must intend the curse which will fall on him in the future state; for no such curse as is here described, and opposed to the blessing pronounced on him who trusteth or believeth in God, comes on the sinner in this world; but, as Jeremiah himself says, in this world, "The way of the wicked prospereth, and they are happy that deal very treacherously." (Jer. xii. 1.) This curse is expressed in figurative language, but appears to be the same which is fixed by John the Baptist and our Savior on all unbelievers. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth not shall be damned. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

In the Book of the prophet Ezekiel, it is often declared that they who persist in evil ways through life shall *die*, shall *die in their iniquity*. And, on the contrary, they who turn from their evil ways shall *live*. (See Eze. iii.; xviii.; xxxiii.) By *dying* here cannot mean departing out of this life by the death of the body; for the penitent and obedient die this death, as well as the obstinate sinner. It must, therefore, mean what is called the *second death*, which is to be judged according to their works, and cast into the lake of fire, where they shall be tormented forever and ever. (Rev. xx. 14.)

But one text more will be mentioned in the Old Testament importing the future punishment of the wicked, and that is in Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

We now come to the New Testament, to see what is said there on the future punishment of the wicked. We may justly expect greater light on this head, in this more clear rev-

elation of a future state. If, notwithstanding all that is found in the Old Testament, there be really no such punishment, doubtless Christ and his apostles have plainly told us that there will be no such evil, and have not said a word that can be construed in favor it. But if the glad tidings proclaimed in the gospel are consistent with the future punishment of those who reject it, and if a great, awfully aggravated, and endless punishment awaits them, the kind Savior, who is full of grace and truth, and those whom he authorized to preach the whole truth, have certainly warned mankind of this, and stated the doctrine of the wrath to come in the most plain and determinate words.

John the Baptist, who was raised up to introduce the Savior, is not silent on this head, but publishes awful threats against the obstinately wicked, and those who reject Christ. "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." (Matt. iii. 7, 8.) Here he brings into view wrath to come, which could be avoided only by true repentance. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. iii. 10–12.) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

What need of going any farther? The point is decided. He who introduceth the Savior plainly tells us what will be the consequence. They who repent and believe the gospel shall be saved, but all who do not are left in, at least, as bad a case as they could be in had there been no Savior. They shall not see life, but the wrath of God *abideth* on them; they shall be cast into unquenchable fire.

But what does Christ himself say? "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members

should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (Matt. v. 22, etc.) "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matt. vii. 13.) "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils," etc. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came; and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it." (Matt. vii. 22, etc.) "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. viii. 12.) "Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. x. 15.) "Fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matt. xi. 21, etc.) "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Matt. xii. 31, 32.) "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark iii. 29.) "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven." (Luke xii. 10.) There is a certain connection between not being forgiven and punishment or damnation. "So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xiii. 41.) So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the

just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. "Whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works." (Matt. xvi. 25, etc.) "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." (Matt. xviii. 8, 9.) "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Matt. xxi. 44.) "Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. xxii. 13.) "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 14, 33.) "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 50, 51.) "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxv. 10, etc.) "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." (Matt. xxvi. 24.) "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." (Mark viii. 38.) "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two

hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 43, etc.) "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) "Woe unto you that are rich: for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full: for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now: for ye shall mourn and weep." (Luke vi. 24, 25.) "But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear. Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him. But if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite." (Luke xii. 5, etc.) "When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, he shall say, I tell you, I know you not; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." (Luke xiii. 25, etc.) "The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass

to us that would come from thence." (Luke xvi. 22, etc.) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 14–16.) In these words it is implied, that they who believe not on Christ shall perish; and perishing is directly opposed to having everlasting life. All is implied here which is expressly asserted in v. 36, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.) "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 21, 24.) What Christ repeatedly threatens in these words must be evil which would come on them after their death, which can be no less than a proper punishment for their sins. "He that loveth his life, shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." (John xii. 25, 48.) Losing his life, is an evil which is opposed to keeping it to life eternal; therefore, must mean eternal death. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." That is, he shall then be condemned and punished. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 6.) "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." (Matt. xxv. 41, 46.)

Who can read all these words of Christ, and yet think that he came into the world with a design to save all men from future punishment? If we had nothing but his own declarations to determine us, these are more than sufficient to give us as much assurance that the wicked will be punished to a great and awful degree in a future state as we can have that he is the Son of God, the Savior of the world; yea, we cannot doubt of the former, without calling the latter equally in question. No person that ever spoke on earth by divine inspiration has said so much of the future punishment of the

wicked, and preached hell and damnation so much and so often, or set it in so awful and shocking a light, as did the only begotten Son of God, who is full of grace and truth.

But what we find in the writings of the apostles of Christ will show how they understood him on this point, and strengthen the evidence of the destruction and punishment of the wicked in a future state, if it be capable of receiving any addition.

"And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts iii. 23.) These words, with the foregoing, are a quotation from Moses made by the apostle Peter in his speech to the people in the temple, which words he applies to Christ, as being the Prophet of which God speaks by Moses; and here is a threatening of certain destruction to every soul which shall disregard this Prophet: "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." (Acts xiii. 40, 41.) "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." (Acts xxiv. 25.) What could there be in Paul's preaching to make Felix tremble, if he brought no evil into view as coming on the unrighteous and intemperate at and after the day of judgment? If he had preached to this wicked Roman governor that there was no future punishment to be feared,— yea, if he had not preached the contrary,— Felix could not have been terrified. Paul brought the day of judgment into view as matter of great terror to wicked men; therefore, *he* preached that they would then be condemned and punished according to their evil deeds in this life. This appears from the words under consideration, and also from St. Paul's own words: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. v. 10, 11.) What words can more expressly declare that they who die impenitent in their sins shall, at the day of judgment, be condemned by Christ to a punishment answerable to the number and magnitude of the crimes of which they were guilty in this life? And this was the terror which the apostles had in view, by displaying which they sought to persuade men to fly from the wrath to come. They who believe the wicked will not be punished after the day of judgment, do not know the terror of Christ, of which St. Paul here speaks, but deny that there is any such terror; and were a Felix to hear them preach, and believe what they say, he would be so

far from trembling, that he would be soothed into perfect security.

But let us proceed, and see what this apostle says further of future punishment. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Rom. i. 18.) "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil. For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." (Rom. ii. 5, etc.) "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;" (Rom. viii. 13;) — that is, the second death, which is the wages of sin, in opposition to eternal life: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." (Rom. ix. 22.) "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are a savor of death unto death; and to the other a savor of life unto life." (1 Cor. i. 18, with 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (1 Cor. iii. 17.) "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. ix. 27.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Eph. v. 5, 6.) "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." (Philip. i. 28.) "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping,

that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction." (Philip. iii. 18, 19.) "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, covetousness," etc.: "for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Col. iii. 5, 6.) "But he that doth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Col. iii. 25.) "Whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 10.) "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified." (1 Thess. iv. 6.) "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 6–9.) "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10–12.) "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." (1 Tim. v. 24.) "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 2, 3.) "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. iii. 19 compared with iv. 11.) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened," etc., "if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and

bringeth forth herbs," etc., "receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 4, etc.) "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses's law died without mercy; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." (Heb. x. 26, etc.) "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." (Heb. xii. 15, etc.)

We have also the apostle James's witness to future punishment. "For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy." (James ii. 13.) To have judgment without mercy, is to be punished according to his ill desert. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?" (James iv. 12.) "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh, as it were fire; ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." (James v. 1–3.)

St. Peter comes next in course. "By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." (1 Pet. iii. 19.) Here the spirits of the sinners of the old world, to whom Noah preached, being influenced thereto by the spirit of Christ, are spoken of as being in prison, when St. Peter wrote, which was above two thousand years after they left this world. They

are, therefore, prisoners now, confined in darkness and despair, to the judgment of the great day. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. v. 8.) "Who bring on themselves swift destruction. Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the old world, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished. These, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, shall utterly perish in their corruption. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." (2 Pet. ii. 1, 3, etc.) "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. iii. 7, 9, 16.) Here it is supposed that all will perish who do not come to repentance in this life while God waits on them; and, therefore, certain destruction to those who continue impenitent through life, under all means used with them to bring them to repentance, is in these words fully asserted.

It will be thought strange, perhaps, by some, that this passage, from which it has been inferred that all mankind will be saved, should be used to prove directly the reverse, viz., that many will perish. It has been said, if God is not willing that any should perish, certainly none can perish; for who hath resisted his will?

To this it may be answered, in the first place, that it is certainly very strange indeed, and perfectly unaccountable, that St. Peter should here assert that none of mankind will perish, since he had declared the contrary, over and over again, in this epistle, and does it even in this very paragraph. He had said, that false teachers would bring on themselves swift

destruction; that God reserved the wicked to the day of judgment, to be punished; that they will utterly *perish* in their own corruption; and in the next verse but one before this says, the heavens and the earth are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. And with reference to this awful catastrophe, he says, that God does not bring it on immediately, because he is long-suffering and disposed to give men time and opportunity to repent, not willing that any should perish in that destruction which he had just said was coming on ungodly men. So that he here asserts, God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, as he had just said ungodly men will perish; for whose perdition God had already made provision.

The way is now prepared to answer in the next place. When the apostle says, God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, the natural, plain, and only consistent meaning is, that God in his dealings with men, in his providence, does not consult and pursue methods to circumvent and insnare them, to prevent their having a sufficient and fair opportunity to repent; but puts them under all proper advantages for this, sets before them the strongest motives, and waits upon them with great patience and long-suffering; and who has at the same time declared, that if they do not come to repentance in this life, they shall certainly perish in the perdition of ungodly men. He will not put an end to the world, until he has used all proper and suitable means, and taken the greatest conceivable variety of methods and ways, in the wisest and best manner, adapted to bring them to repentance; that they who continue impenitent may appear in their true obstinacy and perverseness, and be left wholly without any excuse; and their full desert of the destruction which God will bring upon them, and his righteousness in punishing them, may be seen in the clearest light by all.

And, by the way, they who suppose that St. Peter here asserts that not one shall perish, must allow he equally asserts that all shall come to repentance, for God is said to will the latter as much as the former; and this repentance is to take place in this life, because God is long-suffering towards them in this world for this end; but they do not pretend that God brings all men to repentance in this world. If, then, notwithstanding what God wills respecting their repentance, they do not repent, what evidence is there that they will not perish? If they say, the repentance which God wills is to take place in the other world, it will then be asked, why he is long-suffering towards them in this world, in order to their coming to

repentance in the other world? If they are not to come to repentance in this life, why does God wait upon them here even to long-suffering, and not send them directly into the other world, where they will repent? For to wait on them here, is only to put their repentance off to a greater distance. To send them out of this world, is the only way to effect and hasten their repentance.

But to proceed: this apostle speaks of those who go to destruction by abusing the Holy Scriptures. "In which," i. e., St. Paul's writings, "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned (or rather, unteachable) and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

The apostle Jude speaks in much the same language with St. Peter, of the punishment and destruction of sinners. He says, "I will, therefore, put you in remembrance how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day; even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise these filthy dreamers, etc.; woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily in the way of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

The apostle John, who so much celebrates the love of God, yet speaks of future punishment. "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John v. 16.) That is, there is a sin which God will not pardon; but it is infallibly connected with the second death, which is the wages of sin. I, therefore, do not direct any Christian to pray for the pardon of this sin. But more of this is to be found in the Book of the Revelation, written by St. John. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. ii. 11.) It is here implied, that all who do not overcome in this life shall suffer the second death. What this is, we shall find fully explained in this book. "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." (Rev. xi. 18.) The destruction here spoken of is consequent on the day of judgment. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and

his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." (Rev. xiv. 9, etc.) "And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever." (Rev. xix. 1, 3.) "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power. And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 6, etc.) "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; *which is the second death.*" (Rev. xxi. 8.) "And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take

away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." (Rev. xxii. 10, etc.)

Having thus attended to what we find in the Holy Scriptures respecting the future punishment of the wicked, the following remarks may be made upon it: —

1. Their punishment will certainly be very great and terrible. If it were not so there would not be so much said of it, and it would not be represented in such language, and by such figures and similitudes, as have been transcribed. It is said, they shall be cast into a furnace of fire, where they shall express their anguish, torture, and rage, by wailing and gnashing of teeth. They shall be tormented day and night, without cessation or the least intermission of ease, in a lake of fire and brimstone. They shall suffer God's fiery indignation and wrath, being in the utmost tribulation and anguish; and in punishing them God will show his wrath, and make his power known, they being vessels of wrath, fitted to this terrible destruction, etc. That must be a very great and dreadful evil which requires such language as this in order to give us the most proper idea of it that we can have in this state.

2. It is abundantly evident, from a great number of the passages of Scripture which have been cited, that this punishment is to be extended beyond the day of judgment; yea, will then commence in its proper magnitude and terrible perfection. They are said to be reserved unto the day of judgment, to be punished. They are said to be treasuring up wrath while in this world, against that day of wrath; and then they are to receive the awful sentence from Christ, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, and actually go away into everlasting punishment.

3. Is it not surprising, that any who profess to adhere to the Bible as a revelation from God should believe there is no punishment for the wicked in a future state; or if there may be some degree of evil after death, it will not be extended beyond the day of judgment in any instance, but all will be perfectly happy from that time forever? This notion is so directly opposed to the Scripture account of this matter, and particularly the passages which have now been mentioned, that it may be expected they, especially the most sensible of them, who have embraced it, will either soon give it up and admit that the wicked will be punished in the future state after the day of judgment, or reject the Bible and turn deists. If they do the latter, they will be more consistent with them-

selves than now they are. If they persist in their present professed belief, with the Bible in their hands, they must be considered as remarkable instances of infatuation and "strong delusion." They, indeed, say they have a number of passages of Scripture in favor of their opinion. But he who has with seriousness and attention considered the Scriptures which have now been produced, may be confident that no Scripture can be found to support a doctrine so directly contrary to such a great number of plain, express declarations; and that he must be under the power of great prejudice and enthusiasm who can be confident he has found one passage in favor of such a doctrine. However, the Scriptures they produce will be particularly considered hereafter, by which, it is hoped, the justice of this remark will be sufficiently supported.*

* To evade the force of the numerous declarations and threatenings of the future punishment of the wicked, which have been recited in the foregoing pages, they who deny that any man will be punished in the future state have suggested the following things: —

It has been said, these threatenings are all levelled against the sins of men; and that these sins or evil principles in men, when separated from them, shall be punished.

But to talk of the existence and punishment, pains and sufferings of sins or evil principles in men, when separated from those who sinned, and they are made perfectly happy, is too absurd and ridiculous to need a serious and formal answer. And it is difficult to conceive how any man can be satisfied with such a solution, or even believe what he advances.

It has also been said, that this threatened punishment is to be inflicted on the devils, not on man.

Answer. Though this does not shock common sense so much as that just mentioned, yet it flatly contradicts what is expressed in every threatening; for wicked men are threatened, not devils. It undermines all ground of reliance on the Word of God; for, according to this, when he says, hundreds of times, that wicked men shall be punished, and particularly gives their character, he does not mean any such thing! Besides, when the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire, the beast and the false prophet are there with him, where they shall be tormented forever and ever. Yea, all the fearful and unbelieving, and murderers, and whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the same lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 10; xxi. 8)

Others have said, these threatenings are designed only to show what sinners deserve, and not what they shall suffer, for Christ suffers the whole; all the evil threatened falls on him. The sinner, therefore, will escape what he otherwise must have suffered.

Ans. 1. This is directly contrary to those threatenings and declarations. It is expressly said, in a great variety of passages, that wicked men, whose character is particularly and abundantly described, shall themselves, in their own persons, be punished: that God will inflict it on them; and that these shall be rewarded according to their works, and receive of Christ the Judge according to what they have done in the body; and that these shall actually go away into everlasting punishment, etc.

Ans. 2. If those declarations and threatenings were only to declare and show what all men deserve, and not what any will suffer, or if they only refer to Christ, and he is the only person that suffers, then one man or class of men, of a particular character, could not be pointed out as the objects of these declarations and threatenings, more than all others; for, on this supposition, they must be equally true of all men, and equally applicable to them, whatever be their char-

4. It ought to be observed, that though these Scriptures have been produced only to show that it is abundantly asserted that a sore and awful punishment awaits all the wicked in the future state who die impenitent; yet, from an attentive view of them, they prove more, even that this punishment will be without end. This has been remarked concerning a number of Scriptures that have been mentioned, in which the punishment is not expressly said to be everlasting; but that it will be so, is necessarily implied; and the same remark might be made concerning a number of others. And it may be observed here, that what the Scripture says of future punishment, being considered in one collective view, nothing can be found which carries the least intimation that this punishment will ever end; which we might expect, since there is so much said of it, if this were true; especially, since there is such infinite difference between a temporary and an endless punishment, and it is of such importance to men to know whether it be without end or not; but, on the contrary, the whole taken together, or if every passage be viewed separately, it carries the complexion of an endless punishment; especially since it is so often, and in such a particular way and connection, asserted to be eternal and everlasting. But as this was not to be particularly considered under this head, it of course brings us to the next section.

SECTION II.

The Holy Scriptures teach that the future Punishment of the Wicked will be endless.

It is particularly and abundantly declared in the Holy Scriptures, that the future punishment of the wicked will have no end.

The evidence of this proposition will be produced under the following particulars: —

acter. Why then is this punishment threatened, and said to be inflicted only on one class of men, of a particular character, viz., those who have no love to Christ, are unbelievers, know not God, and do not obey the gospel, etc., while not one threatening, but promises of deliverance and salvation, are made to those of a different and contrary character, and it is abundantly declared that while the former are punished with everlasting destruction, the latter shall not be punished or condemned, but have everlasting life? This is impossible.

On the whole, do not such notions and evasions as these serve to show how weak and defenceless their cause is who assert there is no punishment for any man in the world to come, rather than to give it so much as any plausible support? Surely they tend to render the Bible useless and contemptible. Must not every consistent friend to that sacred book reject them with abhorrence, and not without surprise that they should ever be thought of by any man?

First. The punishment of the wicked is many times, in the Scriptures, expressly declared to be everlasting, eternal, and to continue forever.

These passages have been mentioned under the preceding head, but must be rehearsed here, with a view to illustrate this particular. "It is said, that the wicked perish forever." (Job xx. 7.) "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever." (Ps. xcii. 7.) The evil that is coming on sinners is called "everlasting burnings." And the prophet Daniel, speaking of the wicked, says, they shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan. xii. 2.) St. Paul, speaking of Christ's coming to judgment, to take vengeance on all that have not known and obeyed him, says, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction. The apostles Peter and Jude, speaking of the punishment of the wicked, say, "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (2 Pet. ii. 17. Jude i. 7, 13.) And Christ himself has repeatedly declared, that the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting. "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark iii. 29.) "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." (Matt. xviii. 8.) "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 41, 46.) On the last-mentioned words, the following observations may be made: —

1. Our Savior here gives a particular and solemn representation of the day of judgment, and states the issue of it, both to the righteous and the wicked, very particularly, and doubtless uses language that is quite plain and intelligible, so that the final state of one and the other is precisely stated, and will be clearly suggested, without need of any labored criticism. The subject is of infinite importance to all; and when our divine Teacher undertakes to give a particular account of it, and to tell all men, of every capacity, learned and unlearned, what are the different and opposite characters of those whom he will set on his right hand, and on his left, and what will be the sentence which he will pronounce on each;

what will be the reward and happiness of the one, and what the punishment and misery of the other, we may be sure he has chosen words that are most plain and easy to be understood, and best suited to convey the truth, and has properly guarded against every mistake. He has not left us in the dark about the duration of the happiness of the righteous, or punishment of the wicked, whether the one or the other shall be endless, or infinitely short of it, but most certainly has stated this important point, in which we are all so much interested, very precisely, so that we are in no danger of making a mistake, and of taking his meaning to be infinitely otherwise than it really is, unless it be wholly our own fault.

2. The word which our Savior uses twice, in this passage, to denote the duration of the punishment of the wicked, and tell us how long this shall last, he has used twenty times on various occasions, and in different discourses, and in every one of these instances he evidently uses it in exactly one and the same sense, and intends by it an endless duration. And when he uses it twice here on purpose to tell us how long the punishment of the wicked shall continue, is it possible that he should intend by it something infinitely different, a duration infinitely short of endless, and that without giving the least intimation of his using it in such a different sense? So far from this, he uses it in such a connection here as will naturally lead us to understand him as designing to express an endless duration, though he had never used the word on any other occasion. This leads to another remark.

3. The same word is used here, in the very same sentence, to express the endless life and happiness of the righteous, which is used to denote the duration of the punishment of the wicked. "And these shall go away into everlasting punment, but the righteous into life eternal." The word in our translation is indeed varied, though *everlasting* and *eternal* have precisely the same meaning, but in the original, the very same word is used in each part of the sentence, and might be most exactly rendered, These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life. If the life into which the righteous go be endless, which all grant, and Jesus uses a word here to express such a duration, then certainly the same word, used in the same sentence to express the duration of the punishment into which the wicked shall go, must mean an endless duration; especially, as the life of the righteous and punishment of the wicked are set in direct opposition to each other. If the punishment of the wicked were temporary and must have an end, and the life of the righteous endless, so that the former is as nothing compared

with the latter, and the wicked as well as the righteous were equally to enjoy everlasting life, would Christ thus set the endless happiness of the righteous and the temporary misery of the wicked in direct opposition to each other, and in the same sentence use the same word to express a duration infinitely different? This cannot be, for such a supposition makes him confound language as never any man did, and renders it perfectly unintelligible and insignificant. This represents Him, who is full of grace and truth, and came into the world to reveal the wonderful love and grace of God, and accomplish and display the great salvation of man, as using words and speaking in a manner which tends to deceive men, and make them believe that this salvation is far less extensive than it really is, and lead them to think he will punish the wicked infinitely more than he designs, — that the duration of this punishment will be equal to that of the happiness of the righteous, when, in truth, it is infinitely less, and not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with the latter. This be far from him. And if it be, there is as much reason to conclude, from his most express and pointed assertion, that the punishment of the wicked will be without end as that the happiness of the righteous will be so; yea, we may be as sure of it as we can be that he is a teacher come from God.

Secondly. The endless punishment of the wicked is expressed a number of times in Scripture in words yet more emphatical, if possible, when it is said to continue forever and ever. "And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." (Rev. xiv. 10, 11.) "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever." (Rev. xix. 3.) "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Rev. xx. 10.) And all the wicked are said to be cast into this lake. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 15.) "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

This expression, "forever and ever," is found twenty-two times in the original in the New Testament. It is used eight times in the epistles of St. Paul and Peter, where they ascribe glory, honor, and praise and dominion to God, forever and ever. It is found fourteen times in this Book of the Revela-

tion. It is used twice to express the duration of the kingdom and reign of Christ and the redeemed. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.) "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xxii. 5.) Three times it is used to express the endless duration of the power, glory, and dominion of God. "To him be glory and dominion forever and ever." (Rev. i. 6.) "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." (Rev. v. 13.) "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever." (Rev. vii. 12.) Six times it is used to express the endless existence and life of God. "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore." (Rev. i. 18.) The words are the same in the original which are elsewhere translated "forever and ever." "And when those four beasts give glory, and honor, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever." (Rev. iv. 9, 10.) "And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever." (Rev. v. 14.) "And sware by him that liveth forever and ever." (Rev. x. 6.) "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God who liveth forever and ever." (Rev. xv. 7.) The same words are used three times to express the duration of the punishment of the wicked, in the places which have been quoted above.

When we find the very same words used in the New Testament near twenty times to express an endless duration, and above ten times in this Book of the Revelation, — and six of them most emphatically, and in the strongest manner, to mark God's eternity, or the endless duration of his existence, — and at the same time find them used three times in the same book by the same writer to denote the duration of future punishment, is it possible to mistake the meaning, and think that in these three instances only these words are used for a finite duration? How can any one think they do not mean an endless duration in these places, but something infinitely short of it, without doing violence to the Scripture and his own reason?

If it were contrary to God's nature and perfections to punish sinners with endless misery, and very impious and most dishonorable to him, and of the worst tendency to man, for us

to entertain such a thought, — which they who oppose this doctrine generally assert, — can it be thought that he would express himself so on this point as would naturally, and even necessarily, lead all to conclude he will thus punish them, even as long as he himself shall exist, and not say a word to guard against this conclusion? Is it possible he should do this in a revelation which is designed to give men right notions of the divine character, and of the future state of the wicked, and in the most plain and decisive manner declare what they are to expect, and to guard against all wrong and hurtful conceptions respecting this infinitely important subject? Most certainly He who liveth forever and ever, and whose kingdom, honor, and praise from the redeemed will continue forever and ever, will punish his impenitent enemies forever and ever, even as long as he liveth. To doubt of this is to call in question the divine authority of this Revelation.

It has been said by some that the words "everlasting," "forever," and "forever and ever," do not mean an endless duration, and are often used for a limited time in Scripture; and that the words in the Hebrew and Greek languages translated into the above English words do not signify an endless duration; therefore, it does not follow that the punishment of the wicked will be without end, though such words are used to denote its duration.

Whether there be any weight in this objection, let every one judge when he has attended to the following observations: —

1. It is certain that the words "eternal," "everlasting," "forever," etc., are, in a great number of instances, used in the Old Testament to express the duration of the existence of God, and of his kingdom and reign, — of his truth, mercy, praise, and honor, and of his counsels, and designs, and the happiness of his friends; and in all these instances an endless duration is intended. We are obliged to affix this meaning to these words here, and, therefore, without doubt this is the proper meaning of them, and they must be so understood wherever they are used, unless we are guarded against it by an express or necessary limitation.

2. It does not yet appear that these words are ever used in the original, when they are translated "everlasting," "forever," etc., where it would not be proper to make use of them, — though they do, when considered in their proper, full meaning, signify an endless duration, — but the contrary is evident. This observation might be illustrated by producing all the instances in which these words are used in the Old Testament, but this would be too tedious. It may suffice to men-

tion one or two, and leave the reader to examine others, if he pleases. When it is said of a servant who refused his freedom, and consequently had his ear bored through with an awl by his master, that he shall serve him forever, though the subject necessarily limits the meaning to this life, yet a word that means an endless duration is properly used here, to signify his perpetual servitude, in opposition to his being made free. When it is frequently said of many of the laws which were given to Israel by Moses, that they were to be everlasting statutes, etc., and should be so to that people, the meaning is plain, viz., that they should never disregard them and set them aside, and a word that signifies endless is the most proper to be used in this case; and, indeed, no other word could convey the idea designed to be expressed. Therefore, though these words are used in instances where the nature of the subject does in some respect limit them, yet this is no evidence that they do in themselves signify a limited time; because a word that signifies an unlimited duration is most proper, and even necessary, to convey the idea in the most plain and the strongest manner.*

3. As to those words in the New Testament, the English reader, who knows nothing of the original Greek, may have full satisfaction about the meaning of them; and that they must intend an endless duration, even when they respect the punishment of the wicked, since they are used so often to express the endless existence of God and his kingdom, and the never-ending life and happiness of the redeemed; and never are used for a temporary duration, unless it be in this instance, which cannot be supposed, without confounding language and doing violence to words, as has been observed.

4. The Greek word which is used six times to express the duration of the punishment of the wicked, and translated eternal and everlasting, is to be found in above seventy places in the New Testament; and it every where is evidently used to express an endless duration, unless those six places which speak of the duration of future punishment be excepted; and is not this sufficient to ascertain the meaning of the word, if we had no other way to determine what it is designed to

* In a deed of conveyance of land, it is given and granted to him to whom the conveyance is made, and his heirs, *forever*. This *forever* is necessarily limited, and is not designed to extend beyond the end of the world; and yet a word which signifies an unlimited duration, or *endless*, is the most proper word to be used here, to signify that the grantor will *never* revoke the conveyance; and if any one, observing the use of this word *forever*, in those instruments of conveyance, should hence conclude that neither this word nor any one in the English language, did signify an endless duration in any case whatever, he would reason as well as they do who make the objection above.

express? * If a consistent and judicious author should use a particular word above seventy times in one small volume, and in every instance evidently make use of it to express precisely the same thing, so that he could not possibly mean any thing else, or be misunderstood, except in five or six of them, should we not think ourselves warranted to fix the same meaning to it, in these instances, unless he had given sufficient intimation that he then used the word in a different sense? There certainly could be no doubt about his meaning in such a case; and if any one should insist upon it, that in these six places he meant no such thing, as he certainly meant in the other, but something very different, and directly contrary, because the word from which this is derived does not necessarily mean any such thing, and is sometimes used in a different sense, would he be thought worthy of any regard?

It is further to be observed, that this word is not only constantly used where the duration to be expressed is endless, which shows the force and meaning of it, as has been observed, but it is expressly opposed to a word which signifies a temporary duration, to express directly the contrary. "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) If this word signified a temporary duration, i. e., a duration which has an end,

* This word is *Aionios*, and is derived from *Aion;* which is used about a hundred times in the New Testament, and does not mean any certain, definite, but an indeterminate duration, unless it be limited by the words or subject with which it is connected; and when the preposition *eis* is put before it, whether it be used in the singular or plural number, it always signifies an endless duration, and is generally translated *forever*, and sometimes *never;* of which there are near forty instances, only two of which respect the duration of future punishment, viz, 2 Pet. ii. 17; Jude v. 13; and no reason can be given why it should not be understood here, as it must be in other places where it is used. When the words are doubled, they are more emphatical, and are translated *forever and ever*. There are twenty-two instances of this, nineteen of which express a duration which is certainly endless. In the remaining three, the duration of future punishment is expressed, agreeable to what has been observed above. From this state of the case, is it not easy to determine whether these words, which in all other instances are used to express a duration which is endless, do mean only a temporary, or an endless duration, when they are used with a design to let us know what is the duration of future punishment?

It is said by some, that this word signifies only an *age;* or *ages*, when it is plural. If it be granted that it is sometimes used for an indefinite age, yet, if the adjective *aionios* is always used to express endless duration, and the substantive is constantly used so, when it follows the preposition *eis*, — and, except two instances, these are the only words used to express the duration of future punishment, — who can be at a loss whether it be endless or not? Besides, it would make no sense, but the contrary, to translate the word *age* instead of *ever*, or *never*. This may be illustrated by an instance or two. "This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as you fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live *to an age*." (John vi. 58.) "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall not perish *to an age*." (John x. 28.) "Thou art a priest *to an age*, after the order of Melchisedek." (Heb. v. 6.)

it could not be opposed to that which signifies such a duration, ever so long; and if it did not mean an endless duration, it would have no force or sense at all in this place, but would signify nothing, and might as well be used to express the duration of the things that are seen as of things that are not seen, and the words might as properly be put thus: For the things which are seen are eternal; but the things which are not seen are temporal; if both words signify only a temporal or limited duration.

THIRDLY. It is not only expressly said in Holy Scripture, that the future punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting, and yet more emphatically, they shall be punished *forever and ever*, but the endless duration of it is yet more strongly asserted, if possible, by negatives, or expressly denying that it shall have any end.

John the Baptist, speaking of Christ, says, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with *unquenchable fire*." (Matt. iii. 12.) That is, fire that cannot be put out; there will be no end to its burning.

Our Savior expresseth this in a yet more pointed and solemn manner: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; for it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 43, etc.)

This is a remarkable and singular passage, in which our Savior, full of love and grace, sets himself to warn men of future punishment, and persuade them, from a particular, awful view of it, to avoid and renounce every thing that will expose them to it. He dwells on the subject, and particularly mentions the hand, the foot, and the eye; and, with relation to each of these, describes the punishment that is connected with not parting with them when they offend. And this punishment is represented in strong and frightful colors; it is to be cast into hell fire; and what adds infinitely to the dreadfulness of it, *it shall never be quenched*—the punishment never shall have an end. And he expressly says, there shall be no end; not once only, but repeats it over and over again, and uses

negatives eight times in this short discourse, with every one of which he asserts that this punishment will have no end.

Our Savior does here, doubtless, allude to the words of Isaiah: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall the fire be quenched."

There are two ways in which the bodies of men are consumed after they are dead, viz., by being cast into a fire and burnt, or left to consume away, and be eaten up of worms, which naturally breed in them. But as the body is soon consumed by the worm, or by the fire into which it is cast, and the worm of course dies, and the fire goes out, the endless duration of the punishment of the wicked is asserted by saying the fire into which they are cast shall not be quenched or go out, and their worm never dies. If they who are cast into this punishment can ever cease to be, or shall be delivered from it after they have suffered for a time, then it could not be said their worm dieth not, and the fire in which they are burnt is not quenched, or put out; for the worm and the fire continue only by the continuance of the subject upon which they prey; when that ceases to be a subject of punishment, the worm dies, and the fire goes out. There could, therefore, be no other expression, perhaps, thought of, which would, with so much precision and so clearly, assert that the wicked shall be preserved in a state of endless punishment. And this fixes the meaning of Christ's words, when he says they shall go away into everlasting punishment, everlasting fire, if there could otherwise be any possible doubt about it. Everlasting fire, the fire in which the wicked shall be tormented forever and ever, is, if we allow Christ himself to tell us, the fire that never shall be quenched.

Fourthly. The future punishment of the wicked is proved to be endless, not only by its being expressly said in the Scripture to be everlasting, or eternal, and that it shall endure forever and ever, and also in a pointed manner declared that it shall never end, as has been shown, but from many other passages of Scripture, in which this truth is plainly, and even necessarily implied.

Our Savior says, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born." (Matt. xxvi. 24.) Not to be born, is the same as to have no existence; therefore it is here said of Judas, that his existence was worse than non-existence; which could not be true, if he were to be happy forever, after suffering a temporary punishment, though ever so long and severe. Judas is, therefore, in these words, sentenced to endless punishment;

and there is the same reason why all impenitent sinners should be punished without end as that Judas should.*

Our Savior says, "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven." (Luke xii. 10.) And if such a one can never be forgiven, then he cannot be saved; but must be cursed and punished as long as he exists. This is expressed in different words by St. Mark, iii. 29: "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." In Matt. xii. 31, 32, it is said, "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." † Here it is asserted by Christ, in the strongest

* In order to evade the evidence of future endless punishment from these words it has been said, (see some deductions from the system promulgated in the pages of divine revelation,) if Judas had given up the ghost before he had been born, he would have escaped all the exquisite distress which he suffered in this life, and so have been happy forever, without being born into this state of misery. This represents Christ as solemnly pronouncing an awful woe on Judas, which yet was nothing more than that which comes on every man that is born, and is therefore equally true of every man as of the traitor; for every man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward, and his life is full of trouble; all which they might have escaped by not being born. Solomon says, It is better not to be born (i. e., not to exist) than to have an existence in this state only. Is not this to make our Savior say nothing, or, rather, to trifle about the most solemn matters?

Not to be born is opposed to existence, and the only natural meaning of the phrase is, not to come into existence.

It is further said, that Christ promised Judas, that he, with the other disciples, should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, which is inconsistent with his being miserable forever.

Answer. We are told, in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that this was not true of Judas personally, but of the twelve when their number was filled up by choosing one to take the place of Judas, from which he fell by his transgression.

† Some have said this last expression means no more than that this sin should not be forgiven under the Jewish or Christian dispensation, as the word here translated *world* is used sometimes for *an age*; and *this world* may signify the Mosaic dispensation, and *the world to come* the Christian, and not the future state.

Answer. It is said in the preceding verse, and in the other evangelists, that this sin shall not be forgiven unto men, without any limitation or exception whatever. And these words that are here added, *neither in this world, neither in the world to come*, cannot be considered as limiting the other words, as they are not in the other evangelists; but they are added to express the same thing in a yet more strong and striking manner. We know what our Savior meant by *the world to come*, by his use of it elsewhere. "There is no man that hath left house and brethren," etc., "for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, *and in the world to come eternal life*." (Mark x. 29–31.) Here the world to come means the future state, and an endless or eternal state, if the followers of Christ will be happy without end.

"It is clearly shown, by Dr. Whitby, that this was used as a proverbial expression, and that it only signified *a thing should never be*, when it was said, *It shall not be, either in this world or the world to come*." — *Dr. Doddridge on Matt.* xii. 32.

terms, that this sin shall not be forgiven. Therefore, they who are guilty of this sin must suffer endless punishment, unless they can have eternal life without forgiveness.

What is said in Heb. x. 26, 27, serves to illustrate these words of Christ: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Where there is no sacrifice for sin, there cannot be forgiveness of sin; therefore all who commit this sin, and all who die in their sins, are got beyond forgiveness, as the sacrifice for sin does not extend to them.

That the wicked will never be released from punishment, and pass from hell into the abodes of the blessed, is asserted by our Savior in the words in which he represents Abraham speaking to the rich man: "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." (Luke xvi. 26.)

Agreeably to this is what Christ hath declared since his exaltation, and when he is speaking his last words to his church and to the world: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand: he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that his holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii. 10, etc.)

The time here spoken of is evidently the time when the events foretold in this book shall be accomplished; when Christ will come to judgment, and reward every man according as his work in this life shall be found to have been, whether good or evil. And then, he says, every man's character shall be fixed, and remain forever as it shall then be found to be. He that is then unjust and filthy shall still continue so, without any possibility of being recovered to rectitude and purity at any future period. And, on the other hand, he that is then found righteous and holy shall be confirmed in holiness, and continue so to all eternity. What could more fully express the fixed ruin and endless punishment of the wicked? And what words could be invented more directly against their notion who dream that they who shall appear unrighteous at the day of judgment, shall in some after period become holy and enter into everlasting life? If the exalted Head of the church here declares that they who shall be found righteous at the day of judgment shall continue so forever, without any danger

or possibility of ever falling from their righteousness, which all allow to be so, how is it possible for any one not to see that he equally and in the same strong terms declares that he who shall then be found unjust shall continue so from that time, without any possibility of being recovered to holiness, even as long as the righteous shall be righteous still?

There are many other passages of Scripture which are clearly inconsistent with the salvation of all men, and which, of consequence, necessarily imply the endless punishment of the wicked. These are too numerous to be particularly mentioned, but they will be pointed out to the reader who attends to the Bible, by being ranked under the following heads: —

1. The everlasting life and happiness of the righteous, and the destruction and punishment of the wicked, are, in a multitude of instances, and commonly, set in opposition to each other, as two direct contraries, which could not be a proper way of representing it, or agreeable to the truth, if they were both to enjoy everlasting life together in the kingdom of God. If the wicked are to be afflicted but for a time and then be delivered from misery, and be as greatly happy as the righteous and as long, then their perishing, their punishment, is as light as nothing, and but for a moment, compared with the eternal weight of glory and happiness, which they shall enjoy equally with the righteous, and therefore cannot be set in opposition to eternal life, or the blessedness of the righteous, as this would be highly improper, and a gross misrepresentation. A few instances out of many which might be mentioned will be sufficient to illustrate this remark. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever. But the wicked shall perish," etc. (Ps. xxxvii. 18, 20.) Here the perishing of the wicked is opposed to the everlasting, incorruptible inheritance of the righteous, which could not be if their perishing were consistent with their enjoying this everlasting inheritance as well and as long as the righteous. For, on that supposition, it is as true of the wicked as of the upright, that their inheritance shall be forever, and in this respect there is no distinction, much less opposition. Therefore, to set them in opposition would be a misrepresentation, and not agreeable to the truth. If the perishing of the wicked runs parallel with the inheritance of the upright, and forever excludes them from this inheritance, then these words express a great and important truth, but on any other supposition they are perfectly unintelligible, or not true.

These same remarks will apply to those words of Christ and John the Baptist. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the

world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 15.) Here it is implicitly asserted that he who does not believe in Christ shall perish; but if to perish is not to be excluded from eternal life, with what propriety or truth can this be set in opposition to having eternal life, when it is as true of the unbeliever as of the believer, that he shall have eternal life, and this happy lot is as much the portion of the former as of the latter? "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Here what is necessarily in our Savior's words, just mentioned, is expressed, and we are told what is meant by the unbeliever's perishing. He shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him as long as he is excluded from life, and that must be as long as the believer enjoys everlasting life.

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil." (Rom. ii. 6, etc.) Here the rewards or portions of the righteous and of the wicked are contrasted and opposed to each other. But if the latter shall have glory, honor, peace, and eternal life, as well as the former, why are the former represented as distinguished from the latter in this, which is common to them both? "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they might be damned," etc. "But we are bound always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." (2 Thess. ii. 11, etc.) Here salvation and damnation are opposed, and Christians are distinguished from those who believe a lie and obey unrighteousness to their own damnation, and set in opposition to them as being chosen to salvation. But if salvation and damnation are so consistent with each other that all who are damned shall be the subjects of eternal salvation, and are chosen to salvation, as really as the true Christian, what does the apostle mean by all this?

"There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy." (James iv. 12.) Salvation and destruction are here opposed as inconsistent with each other, which could not be if there were no destruction inconsistent with eternal salvation.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life." (Matt. vii. 13, 14.)

If all the wicked who go in the broad way do enter into life as certainly, and nearly as soon, as they who walk in the narrow way, only the former pass through a little more severe discipline than the other, is not the broad way as certain a road to life as the other? How then can life and destruction, and these different roads, be opposed to each other?

2. The Holy Scriptures every where represent the servants of God who fear and trust in him as happy and blessed; and, on the other hand, speak of those who go on in evil ways through this life as most miserable, and pronounces woes and curses on them, which is not consistent with their being alike happy forever in the kingdom of Christ. To the former innumerable promises are made, that no evil shall come near them, — that all things shall work for their good, and promote their best interest, — and that they shall have eternal life. To the latter no good is promised, and nothing but evil is spoken and foretold of them, for which there could be no reason, if endless happiness awaited the latter as certainly as the former. If this were the case, they would both be blessed, and there would be no such great difference between them. Though the wicked shall suffer for a time, yet, if this shall issue in their eternal happiness, and be the special and necessary means of it too, what St. Paul says of Christians may, with truth and propriety, be applied to them, That their sufferings, for a time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in them, and their light affliction, which is but for a moment, compared with endless happiness, worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And St. Peter's prayer for suffering Christians will be answered for all that are in hell, or ever shall be there, and may with as great propriety be made for them. "The God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect," etc. And the words of Christ to his disciples may be applied to them. In all your sufferings, "rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." Why then is God's Word so full of threatenings of evil to the wicked without the least intimation of any good coming to them, and of promises of nothing but good to the righteous? Why does God say to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings? Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. There is no peace, saith the Lord unto the wicked, while he speaks peace, and nothing but peace unto his people and to his saints. "There shall no evil happen to the just, but the wicked shall be filled with mischief." (Pr. xii. 21.) The just

suffer much evil, but it is no evil to them, because it is designed for their best good, and will issue in it. And if the future sufferings of the wicked are temporary and designed to purge them from their sins, — are necessary in order to do this, and will have this happy effect, — why is it not as true of them, that no evil shall happen to them? Why are they, with respect to this, set in opposition to the just, and marked out for nothing but mischief and evil? "Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid." (Pr. xiii. 21.) "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate." (Ps. xxxiv. 19.) If the sufferings of the wicked in hell are in mercy to them, and designed to bring them to repentance, and they shall be delivered out of them all, then what is here said of the righteous is just as true of the wicked; though their afflictions and sufferings may be many, yet the Lord will deliver them out of them all. Why then is directly the opposite said of the wicked, that evil shall slay or destroy him, when all the evil that comes upon him will work for his good, and his deliverance is certain and hastening? "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." (Ps. xciv. 12, 13.) If the future punishment of the wicked be of the nature of correction, and God is hereby chastening him, that he may teach him wisdom and bring him to his duty, that he may be delivered from all adversity and evil, and this shall be the happy consequence, may he not with as much reason and propriety be pronounced blessed as the righteous? Why then is he always cursed, and set in opposition to the righteous in this respect?

If the wicked shall certainly be delivered from hell, as soon as he repents and makes his submission to God, and God inflicts this evil on him with a design to bring him to this, then what is said of the children of God is as true of the wicked in hell — that God chasteneth them for their profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness. And if this be true, are they not blessed? The whole current of Scripture on this head is perfectly inconsistent with the temporary punishment of the wicked, and their eternal salvation, and, therefore, evidently asserts their endless destruction.

3. The Scripture represents the wicked, when rejected and cast into hell, as repenting, and earnestly desiring and seeking deliverance, — but all in vain, for their repentance and cries will not be regarded, — which is inconsistent with their pun-

ishment being of the nature of merciful chastisement, in order to their obtaining eternal life, which shall be granted whenever they submit and ask deliverance; yea, strongly imports that they never shall be heard and delivered.

"Because I have called, and ye refused," etc., "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." (Pr. i. 24, etc.) "Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." (Matt. xxv. 11, 12.) "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." (Luke xiii. 24, etc.) According to this, when the door of mercy is once shut, it will be shut forever; and however earnestly they who are excluded may desire and seek admittance, it will be all in vain.*

Christ represents the rich man in hell as earnestly praying for a little mitigation of his torment, but meeting with a denial; and Abraham tells him there is a great gulf *fixed*, so that they who would come out of hell cannot. No desires of deliverance that will ever take place in hell can avail or be regarded. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the case of those who come short of being real Christians in this world, and so are cast into hell, is represented by Esau, who, by selling his birthright, lost it forever. "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected:

* These words of Christ are in consequence of a question which was asked by one, in the following words: "Lord, are there few that shall be saved? If our Lord knew that *all* should be saved, and that this was a joyful, glorious doctrine, necessary to be preached in order to set the character of God in the best light and make the brightest display of divine grace, and was perfectly suited to turn men from sin, and lead them to embrace the gospel, and excite in them the highest gratitude, joy, and praise, why did he neglect such a good opportunity to declare this very important, useful truth? Why did he not only wholly conceal it, but make a contrary representation, teaching that all who did neglect salvation in this life would be shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and cast into hell, and that no repentance, earnest seeking and entreaties for deliverance, will then be to any purpose? Can these questions be answered?

for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." This representation must be very contrary to truth, if any repentance and cries for mercy that shall take place in hell will be regarded and obtain deliverance, which will be the case if they are ever delivered. All these passages of Scripture, therefore, and others of the like tenor, are opposed to the deliverance of the wicked from hell, by their being brought to repentance and to cry for mercy, and are not consistent with any future punishment, except an endless one. And this representation militates directly against the notion that future punishment is salutary, and inflicted by God in mercy to the wicked, and tending to their repentance and amendment, in order to their being fitted for eternal happiness. Directly the reverse of this is the idea held up in these passages, and, indeed, throughout the whole Bible. The door of mercy is shut. God punishes them in anger, to show his wrath and make his power known. He will not regard their repentance, nor hear their cries for mercy, but will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their destruction falls upon them, and they will be abandoned to perfect despair and endless woe.

The evidence contained in the Scripture of the future and *endless* punishment of the wicked is now laid before the reader. And is it not as clearly revealed that this punishment will never end, as any truth whatever which is contained in the Bible? It is, at least, as certain from divine revelation that this punishment will be endless as that the happiness of the righteous will be so; yea, it cannot be conceived how the eternal duration of the punishment of the wicked could be more plainly and fully expressed. Language does not afford words more expressive of this than those which are used, and they are used in such a manner and connection as to fix their meaning as clearly, and as much beyond all doubt, as is possible; and this is expressed, or necessarily implied, so often, and in so many different ways, that there is a multiplicity of evidence, and demonstration rises on demonstration; so that, if the doctrine of endless punishment be not most clearly revealed, it is doubtless impossible it should be made known by any words, or in any way whatsoever.

This will well account for the general belief of this doctrine in the Christian world, from the days of the apostles down to this time; and though there have been some individuals, in almost every age, who have renounced it, and have attempted to persuade others to reject it; yet comparatively few, who have paid any regard to the Bible, have hearkened to them; and if the disbelief of endless punishment, and even of any

future punishment at all, should now prevail, and have a wider spread than ever before, it will be doubtless owing to a greater and more general prevalence of blinding moral corruption and the greater power of Satan, which it is foretold he shall have in the world, previous to the flourishing of the kingdom of Christ;* which will produce a remarkable degree of infatuation and error, even strong delusion, in believing that first and most pernicious *lie*, which the great deceiver told in this world, and has been ever since endeavoring to propagate, *Ye shall not surely die;* and it may be justly expected, that the propagation of this delusion will promote to total disregard to divine revelation.

SECTION III.

An Examination of Passages of Scripture supposed by some to teach another Doctrine.

These Scriptures must be full and express, and most evidently opposite to the doctrine of endless punishment; and so worded and in such connection, as not to be capable of a construction consistent with it, in order to have any weight in the mind of an honest inquirer, who has attended to the Scriptures which have been produced, wherein it is so often, so expressly, and in so many ways asserted; and if any such passages are to be found, which can by no means, in a fair and honest way, be reconciled to the future and endless punishment of the wicked, an insuperable difficulty will be introduced, viz., that the Bible is inconsistent with itself, so that one part cannot be reconciled with another.

It is not uncommon for men to appeal to the Scriptures, in order to support the grossest errors, and think they find much in the Bible in their favor; therefore, in the matter before us, it becomes us carefully to examine those Scriptures which are produced as inconsistent with endless punishment, and whatever plausible gloss has been put upon them, if they appear capable of a natural, fair construction, perfectly consistent with it, we shall have the satisfaction of seeing the consistency and harmony of the Holy Scriptures on this point, and this doctrine will, if possible, be more confirmed.

It would be needless, if it were practicable, to consider every text which has been mentioned by those who plead for uni-

* "And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world," etc. (Rev. xvi. 13, 14.)

versal salvation as favoring their cause. It will be sufficient to attend to those upon which they appear to have the most dependence; and if it can be proved these are nothing to their purpose, the rest will, of course, be given up. To prove that all men will be saved, those passages of Scripture are produced which speak of the sufficiency and designed extent of the atonement made by Christ for the sins of men; such are the following: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) "Who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) "That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." (Heb. ii. 9.) "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.)

In order to see the true import of these Scripture passages, and a number of others which are to be mentioned, the following observations must be made and kept in view: —

1. The atonement which Christ has made for the sins of men, by his obedience unto death, is every way sufficient for the salvation of all men; as sufficient for all as for any one. This has effectually removed the difficulty, the bar which was in the way of the salvation of any one of mankind, and this is as fully removed with respect to all as to one; and there is nothing of that kind which Christ came to remove out of the way by his atonement, in the way of the salvation of the whole world. Had it not been for this atonement, the sins of men had barred the way of their salvation, and mercy could not have been extended to them. Christ, by making atonement for sin, has taken this obstacle out of the way of man's salvation, even the salvation of all men of the whole world. It is in this sense that he has "finished the transgression, and made an end of sin." (Dan. ix. 24.) In this sense, he has taken away the sin of the world, is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and has "put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. ix. 26.) This observation alone opens an easy, plain, natural, and important meaning to the passages now under consideration, and to others which will be mentioned; a meaning which has no respect to the actual salvation of all men, and is perfectly consistent with those numerous declarations in sacred writ, that multitudes shall, notwithstanding, perish forever. Though sin is, in this true, important sense, taken wholly out of the way of the salvation of all men, yet something further is necessary, in order to their actual salvation, which must take place, or they will die in their sins, and perish forever; and what this is, we find clearly stated and abundantly declared by Christ himself, and his apostles. Our Savior has fixed it beyond all dispute. "For

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) The Savior is given to the world, and he has taken away the sin of the world by the sacrifice of himself; nevertheless, they only who believe on him shall be saved, and they who refuse and reject him shall perish; for "he that believeth not shall be damned." What can be plainer than all this? and how can the Scriptures be consistent, if this interpretation be not admitted?

2. It follows from the preceding observations, that the salvation procured for man by the atonement of Christ, and opened in the gospel, is a common salvation. There is sufficient provision made for the salvation of all. It is, therefore, for all, proposed and offered to all, without distinction. It is offered to their acceptance, that whosoever is willing and does accept of it shall be saved, and none can fail of this salvation but by a continued neglect and obstinate rejection of it to the end of life. This salvation, therefore, belongs to all, in this sense. It is salvation for all men, the whole world, if they will accept of it, or unless they reject it. It comes to one as well as another, without distinction. This appears, and is expressed, in the orders Christ gave to his disciples, and in them to all who are authorized to preach the gospel. "Go teach all nations. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." That is, to all men. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If the declared will and command of Christ had been properly regarded and executed, and were it not for the inexcusable wickedness of men in opposing or neglecting the gospel and the great salvation it proclaims and offers to all, every son and daughter of Adam on earth would soon have heard this good news, and would have believed unto salvation; and every one of mankind who have lived from that day to this would have been saved, having come to the knowledge of the truth.

This gives a clear and determinate sense to the words of St. Paul: "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 1, etc.) The apostle knew that it was the express will and command of our Savior, who is God, that the gospel should be preached to all men, that they might come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved; unless they should wickedly reject it when offered to them. And how could this be expressed better, or in more

proper and intelligible language, than in the words just quoted? And if this be the most natural, easy, and consistent sense of the words, then they are perfectly consistent with the eternal destruction of all who, in this life, reject the gospel, or neglect this great salvation.* The propriety and importance of such expressions as are now under consideration, will further appear by observing,—

3. The Jews had very contracted, unworthy notions of God's designs of mercy to men, and of the work and salvation of the Messiah. They confined this salvation wholly to themselves, and considered all other nations as outcasts, wholly excluded from God's favor and all benefits in the kingdom of Christ, unless they became Jews by circumcision. This was a fixed and favorite doctrine among the Jews, and it was not

* To make out from this passage that all men will be actually saved, it has been asserted that "God authoritatively wills the salvation of all — wills it as a being of supreme, uncontrollable power, a being that will be obeyed in spite of the corrupt dispositions of men," etc. But this is said without any proof; yea, contrary to the clearest evidence. God our Savior willed and commanded that the gospel should be preached to every creature; so that the whole world might be saved, unless they should perseveringly reject the salvation offered. But this his will has been opposed by men, so that it has not taken effect, and millions have perished by this neglect. And this is the will spoken of in the text under consideration. Besides, if this meant the efficacious will of God our Savior, a will with which the event is necessarily connected, why has it not taken place in this world?

God can as easily bring all to the knowledge of the truth and to a state of salvation in this life as in any future time. Why, then, does he not effect it here; but put it off to a distant period, in the unseen world, with respect to which not a word is said of bringing men to the knowledge of the truth and to salvation who die in their sins? Or, rather, why will any imagine this, when there is not a tittle in this passage to support it, but all is against it?

God our Savior has provided salvation for all men; has formed an institution which comprehends, and will infallibly effect the salvation of all men, if properly regarded and improved by men, and this he hath willed and commanded to be done. It is his express will and command that this gospel be preached to every creature, to all men, and he wills and commands all men every where, upon hearing that gospel, to repent and believe the gospel unto salvation. In this sense he wills that all men should be saved; but this his will has been resisted by the folly and obstinacy of men; as it was in another instance, of which he himself speaks. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often *would* I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not!*" (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Here is the same word in the original as in the text under consideration translated *will*, and in this passage, *would* might have been rendered how often have I *willed* to gather thy children. Here he represents himself as willing the salvation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which they prevented taking effect, by their refusal to accept his offered kindness. He had made full provision for their salvation, and offered to bestow it on them; so that, had they consented and accepted the offer, they would have been saved; and this he calls his *willing* to protect and save them; but notwithstanding this, they perished, because they would not comply with his kind offer.

But more than enough has been said to show how far the words under consideration are from affording the least evidence of the actual salvation of all men.

easy for them to give it wholly up, and free themselves from all the influence of it, when they embraced Christianity. The apostles themselves, for some time after the resurrection of Christ, formed their notions of salvation by this Jewish prejudice, in which they were educated, and had no thought of offering salvation to the uncircumcised Gentiles. Several miracles were at length wrought in order to convince them that in every nation he that feared God and embraced the gospel was accepted of him, and saved, and that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, as well as unto Jews.

And this prejudice remained on the minds of the Jewish Christians for a long time, which the apostle Paul, who was an apostle of the Gentiles, took special care and pains, in his epistles, to oppose and eradicate, by asserting that salvation by Christ was as free and as much for one nation as another; and therefore to be preached and offered to all nations and every man, without distinction. And with this view, the expressions under consideration are evidently used, as well as many others of the like kind, in the New Testament; and their full meaning, design, and importance will not appear without keeping this in view. This observation may be illustrated by reviewing the passage that has been considered. (1 Tim. ii. 1.) The true meaning may be expressed in the following paraphrase: "I exhort that Christians pray for all men, Gentiles as well as Jews, without making any distinction; for this is certainly acceptable to God our Savior, who is the God and Savior, not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also, and has provided salvation equally for all nations and all men; and has willed and commanded that the gospel should be preached to all nations, and salvation freely offered to all, without distinction, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved, unless they perish by their own fault; for there is but one God, who is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, whose mediation and atonement, therefore, does not respect one nation only, but is unlimited and universal; and he gave himself a ransom for all, that this gospel might be preached, and salvation offered to all men, which he determined should be testified and made known in due time, however ignorant of it both Jews and Gentiles have been in ages past. This has, indeed, been a mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; that is, that 'whosoever believeth may be saved.'"

The following passages of Scripture have been also urged against the doctrine of endless punishment: "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) "For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. xv. 25.) It is said these Scriptures are inconsistent with the continuance of sin and misery forever, for these are among the enemies which shall be put under the feet of Christ, and are the works of the devil which he came to destroy; that Satan's head cannot be bruised effectually, and his works destroyed, if any of the human race are left in his hands, and finally destroyed in endless sin and misery.

That these declarations do not afford the least ground for such a consequence, will be very evident, by attending to the following observations: —

1. The natural and common meaning of a person's having his enemies put under his feet, is his completely defeating and overcoming, and triumphing over them. This was represented by the captains of the men of war in Joshua's army putting their feet upon the necks of the kings of Canaan. (Josh. x. 24.) This does not imply that the enemies are reconciled to the conqueror, and do cordially submit, and become his friends, and applaud and rejoice in his conquests, but suppose the contrary, viz., that they continue his enemies, though completely overcome, and they are held under his feet, to answer his ends and grace his conquest and triumph.

2. The devil will be most effectually subdued, his works will be destroyed, and his head bruised in the highest sense and degree, when he shall be perfectly defeated and disappointed in all his ends and designs, and every thing he has attempted and done against Christ and his interest shall be turned against himself, to answer those ends which he constantly sought to defeat by all his attempts, and Christ shall be more honored, and his kingdom more happy and glorious forever, than it could have been if Satan had never opposed him, or seduced and destroyed any of mankind. This does not imply that the devil shall ever become a friend to Christ, or cease to exist, or that all the human race shall be saved, but the contrary may be necessary in order to effect this to the highest degree, viz., that the devil and his angels, with all his impenitent followers in this world, be doomed to everlasting punishment, as Christ himself says they shall. And that this is necessary in order to destroy the kingdom and works of the devil most effectually, and to answer the most important ends to Christ and his eternal kingdom, will, it is hoped, be made

to appear in the sequel. In this view these passages of Scripture are so far from being inconsistent with endless punishment, that this is necessarily supposed and implied in what they assert.

Another passage of Scripture, which refers to the same event, is found in Philip. ii. 10, 11. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This text has been produced as inconsistent with endless punishment, and as a full proof that all men and devils will be finally saved. The whole weight of their argument, from this passage, lies in the meaning they affix to bowing the knee at the name of Christ, and confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. They say this means a voluntary homage paid to him, as his friends and obedient servants. But what evidence is there of this? The words are as capable of another meaning as of this, and perfectly agreeable to the design of the apostle here, which is to show how Christ is exalted and honored, and is to reign until all creatures and things in the universe shall be made subject to him, and his enemies to be put under his feet. His friends will bow the knee to him, and cheerfully give him the glory due to his name, and joyfully submit to him, and own him as their Lord and the Lord of all. His enemies also will be obliged to submit to him, and own his power and dominion, and that they are justly condemned and punished by him; and while in punishing them he will tread the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, it will be to the glory of God the Father. In this sense, this same apostle quotes and uses these words in his Epistle to the Romans, xiv. 10, etc.: "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Here the apostle uses the words only to signify that all shall give an account to Christ as their Judge, and consequently receive a sentence according as their works have been, whether good or evil, which he will cause to be properly executed. And may we not, rather, *must we not* understand them in much the same sense, when he uses the same words in another epistle?

The apostle Peter, speaking of Christ, says, "Whom the heavens must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 21.) Some have thought these words signify that all creatures shall be restored

to holiness and happiness by Christ. That they import no such thing will be evident, if the following things be observed: —

1. The restitution of all things seems to mean nothing else here but the accomplishment of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets. This sense is given to the original word, in some translations, and is natural and easy, and agreeable to the following words, which have been cited.

2. All things will not be restored to their former state at Christ's second coming, and therefore this cannot be the meaning. This earth and the visible heavens are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.

3. The time of the restitution of all things, of which the apostle speaks, is the time of Christ's coming to judgment, which is elsewhere called his coming the second time; for the heavens must receive him till this time of restitution, which they will not do, any longer than to the day of judgment, for then he will "so come in like manner as his disciples saw him go into heaven." Therefore, they who allow there will be any punishment of men and devils after the day of judgment, as all must who will pay any regard to the Bible, cannot make this text mean the restoring all creatures to holiness or happiness, consistent with their own notion of the final restitution.

4. If the restitution of all things does not mean only the fulfilment of all the great things which the prophets have foretold, which has been observed as the most natural sense, and will certainly take place at the day of judgment, and if something more, or different, be signified by this expression, it must mean the restitution of all things from the state of disorder and confusion into which they are fallen by sin, into a state of order, at the day of judgment; when all shall be called to an account, and rebellion shall be silenced and come to a proper issue, and every one be rewarded according to his works, and all obstinate sinners, both men and devils, receive their proper doom and punishment, while the righteous are separated from them, to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, and Christ and his kingdom receive all the advantage of the rebellion that has taken place, and of the endless punishment of the wicked, so that there shall be unspeakably more glory and happiness in the kingdom of God, in consequence of sin and the endless punishment of the wicked, than could have been without it. When things shall be brought to

this state and issue, which certainly they will be at the day of judgment, the restitution of all things will take place to the highest degree. Every thing will be set perfectly right, the wicked will receive their proper punishment, all the reproach cast on God's law, government, and character will be wiped off, and he shall have his full revenue of glory, by all the sin and punishment of the wicked. Christ shall receive the full reward of his work, and his kingdom have all the advantage of the whole. Who can imagine a more perfect and glorious restitution of all things than this?*

Another text, which is produced in favor of universal salvation, and to oppose the doctrine of endless punishment, is Rom. v. 18. "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life."

Answer. The apostle had particularly stated the way by which men become interested in the righteousness and salvation exhibited and offered freely to all in the gospel, and proved that this is by faith, or believing in Christ, or receiving him, and the abounding grace and gift of righteousness by him, and had abundantly insisted that there is no other possible way for men to have any share in this righteousness and justification by Christ, but by faith. He had mentioned this above twenty times, in this epistle, before he comes to these words now under consideration, keeping it constantly in view. It will suffice to cite only three or four instances now out of more than twenty. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." (Rom. i. 16.) "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.) And this chapter begins with the following words: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And in the sentence immediately preceding the words we are upon the same thing is brought into view, though the word faith or believing is not used. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 17.) Here the word receive is active, and expresses that particular exercise

* Christ says, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." (Matt. xvii. 11.) The same word is used here as in Acts iii. 21. There it is a substantive, and here a verb, and must signify to regulate and reduce things to order. This John did by preaching repentance and reformation, and declaring that all who refused to comply should be punished in unquenchable fire. Christ will restore all things by seeing this most completely executed.

or act by which men embrace the gospel or receive Christ, and is the same thing with faith, or believing on Christ. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name." (John i. 12.) He here limits the abundant grace and gift of righteousness, by which men reign in life, to those who receive it, or believe on Christ, for it is in and upon all them that believe. There was, therefore, no need of repeating this limitation in the words under consideration, and saying, "Even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came [or comes] upon all men [who believe] unto justification of life." For this is naturally and even necessarily understood; and it would be doing violence to the words to leave out this idea, and make the apostle say, in direct contradiction to what he had so often asserted before and labored to prove, that justification and salvation comes alike upon all men, believers and unbelievers, or whether they believe or not; and this not only makes him contradict himself, but the express words of Christ and John the Baptist, "He that believeth not is condemned already. He that believeth not shall be damned. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The free gift does indeed come to all men, in the offer of the gospel, and it is wholly owing to the wickedness of men, disposing them to slight and reject this salvation, thus brought and coming to them, that all men, even every one of the human race, are not actually saved; but still it remains true, that they only who believe, and thankfully receive this offered grace and gift of righteousness, shall be actually justified, and reign in life by Jesus Christ; for he that believeth not, after all, shall be damned.

It has been also imagined, that the salvation of all men is asserted in the eighth chapter of this epistle, (verse 19–23.) "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but we ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

In order to make this passage of Scripture have the least appearance of asserting universal salvation, the creature and

the whole creation* must mean rational creatures only; of which there is not the least evidence. But that this is not the meaning, is very manifest. This word, which is used four times in these verses, is found in fifteen other places, and does not appear to mean rational creatures only, except in two places. (Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 23.) It is used twice in the first chapter of this epistle, (verse 20–25,) where it means the visible creation and creatures in general, as it also does in the 39th verse of this chapter; and that by the creation, in this passage, is meant, not man, but the visible, material creation, and the various inferior creatures, subjected to man and abused by him, is evident: 1. Because the creature is said to be made subject to vanity, not willingly; which cannot be true of those who are voluntary servants of sin, which all men are, except those who are the sons of God. 2. The creature or creation is here distinguished from the sons of God, (verse 19–23,) so that neither the wicked nor the children of God are here intended by the creation.

The apostle is in this passage representing the certainty and greatness of the glory which shall take place in behalf of the church of Christ, which he had mentioned in the preceding verse, as the consequence of their present sufferings. This he does, by first bringing into view the church's deliverance from the power of evil and wicked men, in the latter days, when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and they shall reign with Christ on earth." In order to exhibit the certainty and greatness of this event, he, by a figure often used in Scripture, represents the whole creation as unwillingly subjected to bondage in the service of wickedness, and groaning under this calamity, and earnestly desiring and expecting deliverance; which will take place in this happy state of the church, when the creation shall be delivered out of the hands of the wicked, and consecrated and improved by saints, to the glory of God and happiness of his children. Thus he makes the visible creation, now subjected to vanity, and in bondage to Satan and wicked men, to groan, and speak a language which is a sure and standing evidence and pledge of the future glory of the church in this world; and then in the 23d verse he passes from this deliverance and glory of the children of God to the yet higher and complete glory of the church at the general resurrection, when the children of God shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom

* It is the same word in the original; and the passage would be more intelligible, perhaps, to the English reader, had it been translated *the creation*, in each clause of the text.

of their Father; for which complete redemption, not the whole creation, but believers, wait and long, in this state of suffering and sin, with eager expectation.*

In this view, the connection of these verses with the preceding is plain and natural, and the gradation observed, clear and beautiful. Here is not a word in favor of universal salvation; but the whole is perfectly consistent with what this apostle asserts in this chapter, and the next, and elsewhere, viz., that they who live after the flesh shall die; and that God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endureth with much long suffering these vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, etc.

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." (Eph. i. 10.) "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col. i. 20.) These words have been produced by some, as containing the doctrine of universal salvation; as all things, which are in heaven and on earth, are here said to be gathered together in one, and to be reconciled unto God by Christ, which, they say, certainly comprehend all men.

Ans. 1. By gathering together in one all things in Christ — or, as it might be rendered, gathering all things together under one head — is doubtless meant setting Christ at the head of all things in heaven and earth, — i. e., on the throne of the universe, having the government and direction of all things put into his hands, — or, as he himself expresseth it: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." (Matt. xi. 27.) The whole created universe, which is expressed by heaven and earth and the things therein, fell into a dissolved and broken state, in a sense, by the introduction of sin. Christ is appointed to bear up the pillars of it, to prevent any evil coming by sin on the whole, and to bring the greatest good out of it by the redemption of the church, and its attendants and consequences; and that he may effect this,

* When it is said, verse 21, "The creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, *into* the glorious liberty of the children of God," the meaning is, that the visible creation which is now abused to answer the purposes of the enemies of God shall be delivered from this bondage, in itself so undesirable, *in* the deliverance and glorious liberty and triumph of the church, in the latter days, and for the sake of the children of God. The word here translated *into* is, many times in this epistle, and in other places, translated *in*, *for*, *to*, and *unto*.

all things are put into his hands, and he is made the head of all. This is expressed by the apostle in the same chapter (verse 22) in different words, which serve to explain these under consideration: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." To gather together all things under one head, and to constitute Christ head over all things, is the same thing. But this does not imply the savation of all things, or of all men, nor has any relation to it.

2. The other passage, in the Epistle to the Colossians, doubtless means much the same thing with this, and they are to be considered as parallel texts. Whoever reads these two epistles with attention, — written by St. Paul, and most probably about the same time, — and compares them together, will find that much the same matter is contained in them, and often expressed in the same words, with but little variation. The only difference in the words of these two parallel places is, that in the former, all things in heaven and earth are said to be gathered together in one in Christ; in the latter, the same things are said to be reconciled by him. When all things in the created universe — which had, in a measure, fallen into confusion, and jarring contradictions, and discord, by rebellion — were put under Christ to be formed into one harmonious system, — bringing good out of all the evil, and causing every thing to conspire to bring the greatest honor to God, and issue in the highest good of the whole, — all things in heaven and earth were, in the most important and highest sense, reconciled to God in him; and this is the same with gathering all things together in one, by or in Christ. Thus these passages appear to harmonize, and express one and the same thing. How can all things, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven, — by which more are comprehended than angels, and men, and all rational creatures, — be reconciled, in any other sense? These words, therefore, make nothing against endless punishment, but are in favor of it, and necessarily imply it, if this be most for the honor of God and the general good, and necessary, that all things may be put in due order and the most perfect harmony; which will be considered in a following section.

Some have thought the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 22) assert the salvation of all men: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But this must certainly be owing to want of proper attention to this chapter in general, and to the words which immediately precede and follow these. The apostle is here speaking of the resurrection of the body — of the resurrection of Christ, and of those who

belong to him; and not a word is here said of the resurrection of any other person but those whom Christ repeatedly promises to raise up at the last day, viz., those who in this life believe on him. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 40.) It is certain from Scripture that there shall be a resurrection of the wicked; but this is not brought into view by the apostle in this chapter, but he attends wholly to the resurrection of Christ and his people, that is, the resurrection of the body. The words with which these are connected make this sufficiently evident. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." By *death* and *dying* is meant the death of the body; and by "resurrection," and "being made alive," is meant the resurrection of the body, and that only of the saints.

The word "all" is, therefore, necessarily restrained here to all that belong to Christ. When it is said, In Adam all die, it means all that are in Adam — all his posterity; and when it is said, In Christ all shall be made alive, it means all that are in Christ; so that the latter "all" is not of equal extent with the former. The apostle expresseth himself here just as he does when speaking of Adam and Christ in that passage which has been considered. "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. v. 18.) It has been shown, that, by the context, the words "all men," in the last clause, are necessarily restrained to all those who belong to Christ, or believe in him; and in just the same manner the word "all," in this place, is, by the context and the matter treated of, necessarily restrained to all that are Christ's, or believers in him. And they who will not attend to the context, and take these words in their only natural, plain meaning, but run away with the mere sound of a word or two, without considering their connection, only to support a favorite opinion of theirs, will not understand the Scriptures, but remain in darkness.

Our Savior says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) It has hence been inferred, with great assurance by some, that every one of the human race will be saved by Christ.

This is the only word which Christ spake when he was on

earth in favor of universal salvation, if this be so; and this had need be very plain, and strongly asserted here, and so that the words cannot possibly be understood in any other sense, to counterbalance all that has been quoted from him, in which the contrary is asserted over and over again in the most plain and unequivocal terms. One design of Christ's coming into the world was to reveal the true character of God — to proclaim the love of God, and his designs of mercy to men, and what would be the issue of all this to mankind. And if his grand design was to save every man, and this were necessary for the full and most glorious display of the divine character, it might have been expected that he would dwell much upon this glorious theme, — the salvation of all, — and set it in a light most clear and incontestable. But the fact is so far from this, that he dwelt abundantly on the future and everlasting punishment of the wicked, and set it in the most alarming, dreadful light, representing it by being cast into a furnace of fire, — into a fire that never shall be quenched, where there worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, — and dwells long upon it, repeating it again and again. And he leads us to the day of judgment, and represents himself as dooming the wicked, even all who were not friendly to him in this world, to everlasting fire, and concludes by saying, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." And he has not left the least hint to caution us against understanding him as asserting the endless punishment of the wicked, nor has he spoken one sentence that any one pretends has the least appearance of a contrary meaning, unless it be this. If, when this is carefully examined, it should appear to assert that every man that ever did or shall exist shall be saved, and cannot be fairly understood in any other sense, we shall be thrown into an inextricable plunge by finding a most astonishing inconsistence.

But there will appear no danger of falling into such a difficulty, and an easy and natural sense will be found in these words, consistent with the endless punishment of the wicked, by attending to the following observations: —

1. These words of Christ evidently respect the consequence of his crucifixion in this world, and while men are in this life; and it is a forced sense, indeed, to suppose they respect every person that had ever lived, and was then in the unseen world; or that he means to say, that though men live in unbelief through life, he will draw them to himself, and they shall be converted after they die. The words of Christ respecting the same thing serve fully to explain these: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man

be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.) Here Christ tells how men should be drawn to him, viz., by believing on him; and all that do not believe on him are represented as certainly perishing.

2. The words *all* and *all men* are used when every individual is not intended, but *many*, or all in general, or a great multitude. There are the following instances of this, and many more that might be mentioned: "All Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to John, and were baptized of him in Jordan." (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) "All men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed." (Mark xi. 32.) It is said all men came to Christ. (John iii. 26.) The disciples say to Christ, "All men seek after thee." (Mark i. 37.) They do not mean every man, without exception, for that was not true.

The words *all men* are sometimes used for the Gentile nations in general, in opposition to the Jews only; and to signify that the gospel and salvation were not confined to the latter, but equally extended to the former, though every man be not included. Our Savior speaks the words under consideration at an interview which he had with a number of Greeks, proselytes to the worship of the true God from among the Gentiles, who had come up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast; and, upon their desire, were introduced to him by his disciples. These words are spoken with reference to them, and are suited to convey this idea to them, viz., that after his death, of which he speaks in the preceding verses, salvation by him should be extended to the Gentile nations, as well as to the Jews, and they should be drawn unto him, and not that he would actually save every one of the human race; for such a thought could not be suggested to them by these words. Nor have we now any warrant to put such a forced meaning on them, when another, consistent with all that Christ has said of everlasting punishment, is so natural and easy.

3. Salvation by Christ is not only extended to all nations, but the influence of the gospel will continue and spread, till all men in general, if not every individual person then living, shall be drawn to Christ, and become his friends and servants. This event is so much and so often predicted in the Scriptures, that none who attend to them properly can be ignorant of it. Christ represents this by a woman putting leaven into three measures of meal, which continues there till the whole is leavened, and by many other similitudes, all importing that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached and spread in the world, till, by the divine influence attending it, all nations, the whole world, or all men, shall be brought into subjection to him, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom

of Christ. "The Lord will make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God." (Isa. lii. 10.) "And they shall all know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." (Jer. xxxi. 34.) In the twenty-second Psalm, where the death of Christ is predicted, the consequence of this is expressed in the following words: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." These words, and those of our Savior under consideration, express the same event, and illustrate each other. Who, then, can think they imply the actual salvation of all the human race?

Another passage of Scripture which has been produced as favoring the doctrine of universal salvation is 1 Pet. iii. 18–20. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which, also, he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing."

A few observations on these words will be sufficient to show that there is nothing in them favorable to the salvation of all men, but directly the contrary.

1. Granting that Christ did go and preach to the spirits when they were in prison, either before or after his resurrection, though it is not asserted in these words, — for this was done by the spirit, and they might be preached to before they were spirits in prison, — yet, granting as above, we are not told what he preached. He might preach no glad tidings, and nothing but terror and eternal damnation to them, consistent with all that is said here.

2. If it be granted that he preached the gospel to them, we are not told what was the effect, or that so much as one of them repented and believed, and was delivered out of prison. They may all be in prison yet, notwithstanding any thing that is said here, and, consequently, be more miserable forever than if they had not heard this preaching.

3. Granting, not only that Christ did preach to them when in prison, and that he preached the gospel to them, and offered to deliver and save all of them, but that they all accepted the offer and are gone to heaven, — all which is only matter of mere conjecture, as neither of these is asserted or implied in this passage, — but granting them all, it does not follow from hence that all the rest of mankind who die in their sins, or that so much as one, except those who lived in the days of Noah, will be saved, but the contrary may be very strongly inferred; for if all that had died in their sins, from the beginning of the world

to the death of Christ, were to be saved, why are those who perished by the flood singled out from all the rest, and the preaching of Christ confined to them? This looks as if they were to be distinguished from all others, who are left in prison, without hope of deliverance.

This text, therefore, appears to be a poor, sandy foundation for a man to build his hopes of salvation upon, or of the salvation of others; yea, he must be infatuated to a great degree, who has the least dependence on this for his deliverance from hell, and obtaining eternal salvation.

4. When the most easy, plain meaning of these words is fixed, it will very clearly appear that they have no reference to the salvation of any one that ever did or shall die in his sins, but imply the contrary to this.

It is not here said that these spirits were in prison when Christ went, and, by the spirit, preached unto them. They were spirits in prison when this epistle was written, but were once embodied spirits, the spirits of those long since disobedient men who lived in the days of Noah; to whom he, inspired by Christ to foretell the flood, and warn and exhort them to prepare for it, was a preacher of righteousness for one hundred and twenty years; through which space the spirit of Christ did strive with them, and the long suffering of God waited upon them. All this is exactly agreeable to the history of the flood and its attendants. Noah was inspired to warn that generation in words, by foretelling the flood; and by actions, in building the ark; and the Spirit of God did strive with them during this time. But they were disobedient to all his warning and preaching, and consequently perished in their sins, and their spirits are confined in the prison of hell, where Christ fixeth the rich man when he died, and are kept in custody, as the fallen angels are, unto the judgment of the great day.

And that this is the true sense of this passage, is confirmed by the apostle's evident design. It is introduced to encourage and animate Christians to faithfulness, patience, constancy, and cheerful resolution, in following Christ, under all opposition and suffering from wicked men. He mentions the sufferings of Christ, and his triumphant resurrection and deliverance; and then introduces this instance of Noah, and those with whom he lived before the flood, who opposed him, and the spirit of Christ, preaching to them by him. God waited on them with long suffering, and Noah went through his suffering and work with patience and resolution, till at length the time of vengeance came, when Noah and his family were saved; but the disobedient were destroyed, not by ceasing to exist, for though their bodies perished, their souls were shut up in

the prison of hell, where they now were and had been above two thousand years; not as prisoners of hope, but of justice, reserved unto judgment, and final, eternal condemnation. This representation is suited to support and encourage Christians, while they were ridiculed and opposed and suffering by wicked men, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and to excite them, with patience and meekness, to wait the expected end. St. Peter makes use of this instance to the like purpose, in his second epistle, in the following words: "For if God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished." And by the way, if the ungodly men who perished by the flood were delivered and carried to heaven by Christ so long before the day of judgment, they could not be a fit instance of God's reserving wicked men unto the day of judgment to be punished, and it was not to the apostle's purpose; but if they were then in the prison of hell, reserved in confinement unto judgment, to be punished with a severity becoming their guilt and wickedness, this example is mentioned agreeable to truth, and is suited to answer his end.

On the whole, therefore, there is not the least evidence from these words of St. Peter that any one man that has died, or shall die in his sins, ever was, or ever will be, delivered from a state of punishment, to all eternity; but the whole that he says has a different and contrary complexion, viz., that men who are disobedient to Christ while they live in this world are cast into the prison of hell when they die, and are kept there in custody, unto the day of judgment, when they shall receive of Christ, the Judge, according to what they have done in the body, and be doomed to a more severe and everlasting punishment.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." (Rev. v. 13.) These words have been produced by some as a proof that all men and devils will be happy, and praise God and Christ forever and ever. How far they are from proving any such thing, will appear, if it be considered, —

1. John saw this take place, and heard this universal song of praise, when Christ took the government of the world into his hands, being made head over all things to the church; represented by his taking the book out of the right hand of

him who sat upon the throne, in order to open the seals of it, and accomplish the divine decrees contained in it, in the administration of providence to the end of the world. This, therefore, can have no reference to the winding up and issue of things at the day of judgment, or in any after period; and, consequently, can have no respect to the final salvation of all, or of any. And long after this scene, when all the seals of the book were opened, John saw all the devils, and all the men who died in their sins, cast into a lake of fire, where they were to be tormented forever and ever; and he certainly had no vision before or after, which is contrary to this, or looks beyond it.

2. If these words are any proof of the salvation of all men, they are an equal proof that every creature on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them, both beasts, serpents, worms, and fishes, will actively sing praise to God, becoming reasonable creatures, and having the faculty of speech, and will be happy in this employ forever. But there are very few, if any, who will believe all this to be asserted here; therefore, a more natural, consistent meaning offers itself, and must be the only true one.

3. This is only a figurative representation, to express the universal subjection of all things to the power and government of Christ, to be improved to answer his ends, and to promote his blessedness, honor, and glory, and the happiness of this desirable, joyful event, and his worthiness to receive all this. This is parallel to the frequent representations in the prophets and in the Psalms, where mountains, hills and trees, beasts and cattle, fire and hail, stormy wind, dragons, and all the works of creation, are represented as praising God. How absurd would it be to infer from this that all things were rational, and capable of praising God in an active way, or ever will be! All the creation praises God, as the divine glory and character are exhibited by every creature; but in this all creatures and things are passive, except those which are rational, and the friends of God. They are the priests who actively offer up this praise to God, for which all his works of creation and providence afford the most ample matter. In this sense, "the wrath of man shall praise God." (Ps. lxxvi. 10.) All the rebellion of creatures he will turn to his own highest honor and praise; and if it be necessary, in order to this, that there should be endless punishment, which may be true, and the evidence that it is so is to be exhibited hereafter, then this punishment, and those that shall be punished forever, shall render an eternal tribute of praise to God, which otherwise could not have been obtained. In this view, the words under examina-

tion are so far from implying that all creatures, or all men, shall be happy forever, that the contrary is necessarily implied, viz., that creatures will be punished without end, even as many as shall be necessary for God's highest honor and praise. The smoke of their torments shall rise up in the sight of all happy intelligences, and bring a tribute of praise to God, which shall be actively offered up to him by those who are his happy friends. (See Rev. xix. 1, etc.)

"The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Ps. cxiv. 9.) "God is love." (1 John iv. 8, 16.) It is said the character these words give of God is inconsistent with his making any of his creatures miserable forever.

Ans. 1. This is not inconsistent with his punishing them, and inflicting very great evil and misery upon them. This we know he has done in this world. He destroyed the inhabitants of the old world with a flood; he burned up the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone; he overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea; he destroyed the inhabitants of Canaan by fire and sword; and he inflicts all the evils that nations or individuals have suffered in this world, of which there are instances innumerable, and many of them very dreadful and terrible. The Psalmist says, in the words preceding those just quoted, "Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts." In Ps. lxvi. 3, etc., are the following words: "Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! Come and see the works of God; he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men." And he is often styled the great and terrible God, with whom is terrible majesty. And if all this be consistent with his goodness to all, and with his tender mercies being over all his works, then any degree and duration of punishment which his creatures deserve may be consistent with it, notwithstanding any thing we know. Can any man prescribe to God, and point out the exact measure of evil, and the length of the punishment creatures may suffer, consistent with his goodness?

Ans. 2. God may be good to all, and his tender mercies be over all his works, and yet punish his creatures with endless misery. Where is there *one*, who has not experienced the goodness of God? Let him be pointed out, if there be one. In this world, of which the Psalmist evidently speaks, and not of the invisible world, every one who has lived, does now, or ever will live, receives great and constant kindness from God; for every thing better than perfect misery is goodness and tender mercy to sinners.*

* Some render the original words thus, "His tender mercy is *above* all his works." That is, his work of mercy in the redemption of sinners is his chief and highest work. So it is translated in the Septuagint, and by others.

Ans. 3. Though God be *love*, infinite, unbounded goodness, yet this is not only consistent with his punishing creatures according to their deserts, but his great love and goodness may influence him to punish them without end, and not to do it may be inconsistent with infinite goodness.

It is not thought inconsistent with the greatest benevolence and compassion in an earthly king or judge to sentence a criminal to a most painful death, and to see it executed, when the sufferer deserves it, and this is necessary for the public good; yea, this is not only consistent with the most extensive and unblemished goodness, but is itself an exercise and act of love and goodness, because the public and general good is sought and promoted by it. And it is the nature of true and the most exalted love and benevolence to regard the good of the public, and not to give that up, and act contrary to it, in order to favor an unworthy individual. To do this is partiality, which is contrary to uprightness and goodness. Yea, to spare the criminal from just punishment in such a case would be so far from the dictates and fruit of love, that it would be an act of unrighteousness and cruelty, to injure the public, and hurt millions, in order to grant an undeserved favor to any individual. Should a king spare his own son from a just punishment, when the good of the public required that it should be inflicted, and thereby ruin the whole kingdom, this would be the height of injustice and cruelty.*

If God be infinitely good, he must and will punish those creatures who deserve it with endless punishment, when this is necessary for the highest good and happiness of his kingdom, — for this is the dictate of the most perfect love, — and not to do it would be inconsistent with goodness. If this be so, in vain is the love and goodness of God alleged as inconsistent with endless punishment. That the highest good of God's eternal kingdom does not require that such a pun-

* And his causing his son to be punished would be so far from an act of cruelty, that it would be an act of mercy, and perfectly consistent with love and tender compassion for his son. Yea, it would be an evidence of his true benevolence to his son, as it would be the strongest evidence of his love to the public, for true love to the community necessarily implies benevolence to every individual of which the community is composed.

The following words of Cicero, the famous Roman orator, in his fourth oration against Catiline, who was at the head of a conspiracy, formed to destroy the city and the principal men in it, are worthy to be introduced here : —

"For let me ask, should a master of a family, finding his children butchered, his wife murdered, and his house burned by a slave, inflict upon the offender a punishment that fell short of the highest rigor, would he be counted mild and merciful, or inhuman and cruel? If we punish them (that is, the conspirators) with the utmost severity, we shall be accounted *compassionate*, but if we are remiss in the execution of justice, we may deservedly be charged with the *greatest cruelty* in exposing the public and our fellow-citizens to ruin.

ishment should be inflicted, it is certain no man has any right or ability to determine; and the evidence which there is of the contrary will be considered in the next section.

These are the chief and leading passages of Scripture, which have been thought by the advocates for universal salvation to be most clearly inconsistent with endless punishment. And let every one now judge whether they are sufficient to overbalance those which have been produced in the preceding section, as plainly declaring, in a variety of ways, that the future punishment of the wicked will be endless, so that he can sit down with satisfaction and confidence, and rest his eternal interest on this foundation, and rejoice in the prospect of everlasting happiness, purely because the Scripture says that *all* shall be happy forever, whatever be their character, and however they live in this world. Yea, let all judge whether these texts have the least weight in opposition to eternal punishment, and are not perfectly consistent with that doctrine. Surely this may be easily decided. Greater light and evidence cannot be desired, and divine revelation has set this point in so clear a light, that he who runs may read, if he have eyes to see.

SECTION IV.

The Doctrine of Endless Punishment confirmed by Reason.

Though it be granted that reason, without the help of divine revelation, can determine nothing with certainty about future and endless punishment, yet when we find the doctrine of eternal punishment expressly and abundantly asserted in the Bible, we may reason upon it, and as it must be most reasonable, it may appear to be so, and we be able to vindicate it from all objections which any may pretend to found in reason against it. It will therefore be proper and useful to consider this doctrine in the light of reason, and see how far it may be vindicated on this ground, and whether the objections that are made against it can be supported by reason.

Not a few have been so prejudiced against this doctrine, by their inclination and feelings, and their own way of reasoning on the subject, that they come to the Bible determined not to find it there, or, if they do, to reject that book as not from God. And some professed Christians have been so weak and unreasonable as to think they have been doing God service, in attempting to prevent persons of this cast renouncing the Bible, and becoming professed Deists, by trying to make it appear that it contains no such doctrine.

A contrary method is here proposed, viz., to examine their reasonings and objections, and see whether they will bear the test of truth and sound reason, or are only the figments of a dark and prejudiced mind.

First. Let it be inquired whether God may justly punish any of his rebellious creatures with an endless punishment, or whether they can deserve such a punishment.

If sin against God be so great a crime as fully to deserve an endless punishment, so that his justice and righteousness may be gloriously displayed by inflicting it, then this may be one reason why he will do it. But if not, if such a punishment be too great, and exceeds the ill desert of the sinner, it is impossible he should be doomed to it by the righteous Governor of the world.

It has been said that endless punishment is truly an infinite evil, and, therefore, cannot be justly inflicted on any, unless their crimes, or their guilt, be infinitely great; for justice in punishing consists in proportioning the punishment to the magnitude of the crimes for which it is inflicted; but no finite creature, especially man, can contract infinite guilt, or be guilty of crimes infinitely great, in the short space of human life; therefore, cannot deserve an infinite or endless punishment.

Let impartial reason be consulted on this point. If it can be made evident and certain that sin against God is not an infinite evil, a crime of unbounded magnitude, the argument in favor of endless punishment, from the reason of the thing, must be given up, and it must be acknowledged that no reason can be offered why God should punish the sinner forever.* But if sin be an infinite evil, — a crime so great that it really has, in one or more respects, no bounds or limits, and this shall appear to be agreeable to the dictates of reason and common sense, — then it must be acknowledged that it deserves an endless punishment, and that this is the proper

* It will be thought by some, perhaps, that too much is granted here, and that God's punishing the sinner without end may be vindicated as just and proper, though the infinite evil of sin be denied.

There have been those, it must be acknowledged, who have rejected the doctrine of the infinite evil or ill desert of sin, as not to be vindicated, and involving unanswerable difficulties, in their view, and yet have thought they could give a good reason why they who die in their sins should be punished forever, viz., because they will continue to sin, and remain in a state of rebellion without end, and, therefore, will deserve to be punished without end; and this will be proper, and even necessary.

But, perhaps, when this is examined, it will not appear to have any weight, or agreeable to Scripture or reason; for, —

1. The Scripture represents sinners to be sentenced to this punishment, and punished in the future state, for the sins which they did commit, *when in the*

wages of all sin against God, and, therefore, he may with justice and propriety inflict it, and must do it, whenever he lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and rewards sinners according to their works.

But when we attempt to reason on this subject, it ought to be done with great care and caution, lest, through partiality in our own favor, we should reason and judge wrong. Men have all sinned against God, and joined in a common rebellion; and this is naturally attended with a selfish partiality, disposing them to overlook their own guilt, and call in question the righteousness of their Maker's conduct, if he treats them according to their desert. Therefore, however just it may appear to an impartial judge that rebellious creatures should be punished forever, yet no wonder if the heart of rebels should rise against it, and so far prejudice their minds as to blind them to the reasonableness of it, and lead them to pronounce it unjust. The danger of error here lies chiefly on this side.

Whether sin be an infinite evil, and in what sense it is so, will appear, it is hoped, by attending to the following observations, objections, and answers: —

1. All sin, or wrong affection and conduct of men, is more or less criminal, according as their obligations to the contrary are greater or less; or, according to the degree of obligation that is violated is the degree and magnitude of the crime in violating such obligation. There are different degrees of obligation. A man is under greater obligation to love and befriend his parents, wife, and children, or his benevolent friend from whom he has received innumerable kindnesses, than he is to a stranger, or one who has no peculiar relation to him. Therefore, if he is unkind and injurious to the former, this is an unspeakably greater crime in him than his unkind and injurious treatment of the latter can be.

2. The obligations which men violate by sin, or wrong

body, in this world. When our Savior represents himself as sentencing sinners to endless punishment, the sentence is grounded on their past conduct in this world — "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat," etc. And St. Paul says, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Therefore, according to Scripture, sinners will be sentenced to a punishment which they already deserve for their sins in this life; but they would not deserve to be sentenced to an endless punishment for these sins, if they were not an infinite evil, and they infinitely criminal.

2. There does not appear to be any justice in sentencing a sinner to a punishment which he does not *already* deserve for what he has done, for this is to condemn him for that of which he hath not been guilty. Therefore, if the infinite evil of sin be given up, there will not appear any justice in endless punishment.

affection or conduct, are chiefly derived from the object who is thereby opposed and injured; therefore, the chief aggravation of all sin, or the greatness of the crime, is derived from the object against which it is committed, and is according to the greatness, excellence, worth, and importance of that object, and the criminal's special concern and connection with it, etc. There are indeed other considerations which may render obligation, in particular instances, greater or less, and consequently the magnitude of the crime in violating the obligation will be in some respects varied by these, but the chief and highest aggravation of all sin has its foundation in the object against which it is committed, and the evil of it chiefly consists in this.

Hence it is a greater crime for a son to hate and injure, and act a cruel part towards his excellent father, who presides in a large family with dignity and benevolence, and who alone provides for him, and all the rest, than it would be for him to treat one of the servants in the family after the same manner. If a man fall upon a stranger, whom he meets in the road, and takes away his life, in order to obtain his money, his crime is great; but if he proceed to take away the life of his most worthy friend and greatest benefactor, who had often rescued him from death, this would be a crime immensely greater than the former. He is very criminal who injures and seeks to destroy, and actually takes away the life of one of his inoffensive, though most inconsiderable, neighbors; but how much more criminal and ill deserving is he who rises in rebellion against a most excellent prince, on whom a great nation depend for protection, support, and happiness, and actually dethrones him, and puts him to death, and hereby brings total ruin on his whole kingdom?

Concerning such instances as these, the common sense, the feelings of men, determine without hesitation, and even irresistibly, without the labor of long reasoning, they being, in a sense, self-evident. And, doubtless, if men had as clear discerning, and as great sensibility, respecting the being and character of God, his presence, greatness, power, excellence, and goodness, and of the absolute dependence of all things on him, and of the infinite importance of his being and kingdom, as they have with respect to those things mentioned in the examples above, the conviction of the infinite magnitude of the crime of rebelling against him would be more than equally clear and irresistible.

In all the instances mentioned, and in all of this kind that can be imagined, the greater guilt and ill desert of the criminal arises from the object injured, against which the crime is committed; and is in proportion to the degree of obligation violated by the transgressor.

3. All the sins of men are committed against God. He is opposed and injured thereby. This cannot be disputed, since sin is a transgression of the law of God; for to disregard, oppose, and despise the law of God, is certainly to disregard, oppose, and despise God, and to rise in rebellion against his authority and government. Some instances of sin are more directly against God than others; but all sin is against him, and he is the chief object who is opposed and injured by it, — because he is the first and greatest, and so much exceeds all others, who can be injured by sin, in his being, worth, and extensive rights and interest, that, in comparison with him, they are of no consideration, sink into nothing, and vanish. This is strongly expressed by David, when he was humbling himself before God for his sins. "Against thee, *thee only*, have I sinned, and done this evil in *thy sight*."

4. God is infinitely great, excellent, and worthy; and his being, interest, honor, and kingdom are of infinite worth and importance. His interest is so great, extensive, and universal, that, strictly speaking, there is no other interest but this one in the universe. He has made all things for himself; he is the only proprietor who has an absolute, perfect, and unalienable right to all creatures and things. They all depend wholly and constantly on him, and he is the boundless, infinite benefactor to all. His authority over all is without limits, and his government absolutely perfect.

Therefore, all sin is against an infinitely great, worthy, and important object; it is opposition to God, his whole interest and kingdom; it disregards and despises him, and tramples his authority under foot.

From these premises, which none can dispute, but all must grant, the plain and unavoidable conclusion is, that all sin is infinitely criminal and ill deserving. This proposition is as demonstrably certain as any one of a moral nature can be. If wrong affection and conduct be criminal, in proportion to the greatness of the obligation to the contrary, and the obligation be great in proportion to the greatness and worthiness of the object injured by such wrong affection and conduct; if all sin be against God and injurious to him, and he is infinitely great and worthy, and his interest and kingdom infinitely great and important, — all which is granted, — then men are under infinite obligations to God to love and serve him, and be friendly to his interest and kingdom; consequently, all opposition to these is a violation of infinite obligation, and infinitely criminal. Or, shorter, thus: Every crime is great in degree, in proportion to the greatness and worthiness of the being against which it is committed. Every sin is committed

against God, and is an injury done to him, who is infinitely great and worthy; therefore, every sin is a crime of infinite magnitude, and deserves an infinite punishment.

5. The infinite evil of sin appears from the evil consequence of it, or the evil which it naturally tends to produce, and will take place, unless prevented. A crime is great in proportion to the evil it tends to effect, or is the natural consequence of it. But the evil which sin aims at, and tends to produce, is truly infinite.

This appears from what has been already observed. All sin is against God, and his whole interest and kingdom; it tends to dishonor and dethrone the Almighty; to destroy all his happiness, and to ruin his whole interest and kingdom; to introduce the most dreadful confusion and infinite misery, and render the whole universe infinitely worse than nothing, to all eternity. If there be any such thing as infinite evil, this is such; and he who aims at this, and does the least towards it, or what has a direct tendency to it, is guilty of a crime which has no bounds, in this respect, as to its degree of ill desert. It is big with infinite mischief, and, therefore, is in itself an infinite evil, and nothing short of endless punishment can be its proper reward. To inflict an evil infinitely less than this, as a punishment, falls infinitely short of being answerable to the crime, or of manifesting the evil or guilt of it.

To this it will be objected, perhaps, that no such evil actually takes place. God cannot be dethroned, or really hurt, by the sinner; he is infinitely beyond the reach of the rebel, and his kingdom and interest cannot be hurt; yea, God will overrule all sin for his own honor, and to promote the happiness and glory of his kingdom forever. Why, then, should the sinner be punished as if he had actually effected infinite evil, when the evil tendency of what he does and his criminal endeavors are prevented taking effect, and no such evil can come?

Ans. 1. The crime is not to be estimated by the evil that is actually effected by it, but by the nature and tendency of what is done, and the aim of the criminal. Though the evil consequence be prevented, and it be not in the power of the criminal to effect it, yet if he does what he can to accomplish it, his crime is to be estimated by his manifest disposition, and the tendency of what he does. If a subject attempts to take away the life of a king, or, from disaffection to him, does that which tends to destroy him, and would do it, were he not prevented, though the life of the king be not hurt, and the attempt wholly miscarries, yet he is justly condemned as guilty of high treason, and punished accordingly.

The sinner does all he can to dethrone his Maker, and render him infinitely miserable, and ruin his kingdom forever. Every sin has a strong and mighty tendency to this, and no thanks to the sinner that this infinite evil has not been effected by his rebellion; and is his crime not so great, because the evil is prevented by the infinite power and wisdom of God? He who will assert this must renounce all reason and common sense. David, inspired to imprecate punishment on the wicked, says, "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors: give them after the work of their hands, and render to them their desert." (Ps. xxviii. 4.) They are to be punished according to their deeds, the nature and tendency of them, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors, whether they accomplish what they attempt or not. Again: "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger," etc. "For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device which they are not able to perform." (Ps. xxi. 8, etc.) According to the objection, their intending evil against God, and imagining a mischievous device, which they were not able to perform, ought to have been given as a reason why they should not be punished, whereas it is here mentioned as a reason why God would certainly punish them.

And as God, in punishing the wicked forever, will do no more to them than they would have done to him, had it been in their power, — and surely this is but a just and equitable punishment, which they fully deserve, if they deserve any at all, — they will rebel against him, and trample on his authority and laws, let what will be the consequence to him. He would have been dethroned, and made infinitely miserable forever, had they been able to bring it to pass. This is the tendency of their treatment of him, and this must have been the effect, had he not been able to defend himself against them, and counteract their endeavors. And do they not deserve to be treated after the same manner by him, and made eternally miserable? Would any punishment short of this be in any measure answerable to the crime? If they have cast God behind their back, and cared nothing for his honor, interest, or happiness, do they not deserve to be cast off by God, and that he should take no care of their interest or happiness? Their hearts have been full of mischievous devices against God, and all they have done has tended to destroy him, his happiness, and kingdom; and will it not be just to bring the mischief on their own heads, and give them over to endless misery?

Among the laws given by Moses to Israel is the following one: "If a false witness rise up against any man, to testify against him that which is wrong, the judges shall make diligent inquisition; and behold, if the witness be a false witness, and testified falsely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother. And thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." (Deut. xix. 16, etc.) This law requires them to punish the man, who, by false witness, thought and endeavored to bring evil on his brother, by inflicting that very evil on him, though his brother received not the least hurt by it. All will doubtless say this is a righteous law, and it is but just that such an evil-designing man should be thus punished. And will it be unrighteousness in God, who ordered this law, to act by the same rule in punishing those who have borne false witness against him and his character, and have attempted to bring ruin on him and all his friends, by giving them up to eternal destruction, though he and his kingdom have received no hurt by their wicked attempts?

As God and his kingdom are infinitely distinguished from every thing else in their infinite greatness, excellence, and importance, so rebellion against him, and opposition to his interest and kingdom, and an attempt to destroy the whole, must be equally distinguished from any other possible or supposable crime, and, therefore, it is right and proper that it should have an equally distinguished punishment, that is, an endless one. A temporary punishment, which is infinitely less than this, and infinitely less than the evil of sin, cannot answer the end of punishment; it will neither express the evil or crime of injuring the infinitely great JEHOVAH, nor serve in the least degree to show his infinite worth, grandeur, and greatness, but speak a contrary language, viz., that his being, character, and kingdom are of infinitely less worth than they really are, and so would be a real dishonor to him.

If one who has defamed the character of a worthy personage, being prosecuted, convicted, and condemned, should be punished only by paying a small fine, viz., one penny or shilling, the language of this would be, that the character of the person defamed was worth no more, and, therefore, would be so far from answering to the injury, and wiping off the reproach, that it would really fasten the disgrace upon him, and his character would suffer more than if the criminal had not been condemned and punished. And if God should punish rebels against him, who have defamed him, and highly injured his character, with a temporary punishment only, this

would be as far from answering to his infinitely superior, excellent, and important character, and properly vindicating it, as if no punishment at all were inflicted; yea, it would be infinitely worse than none, and really degrade his character, and be a reproach to him. In this case, a just punishment must be answerable to the infinitely amiable, worthy, and important character which is injured and blasphemed; that is, such a punishment as is suited to express the greatness of the injury done, and the infinite worthiness of him who is injured, and thus take off the reproach cast upon him. But this can be no less than an endless punishment. Therefore such a punishment is just; it is deserved, and must be inflicted, if there be any punishment at all, in order to vindicate the divine character.

But there are other objections against the infinite evil of sin, and the sinner's desert of endless punishment, which must be considered.

Obj. 1. It is said, that as all creatures are finite, they are not capable of infinite guilt, or of committing a crime that has an infinite degree of evil in it, or that is in any respect infinite.

Ans. 1. This objection is obviated by what has been said in proving the infinite evil of sin, viz., that this results from the greatness and excellence of the being against which it is committed; and depends not at all on the degree of existence of him who offers the abuse. If a finite creature can affront and abuse his Creator, who is infinitely great and worthy, he can be guilty of an infinite crime; because the greatness of the injury does not arise from the greatness of him who offers it, but from the character of him who is injured.

Ans. 2. If a creature should actually put an end to his Maker's existence, or dethrone him and destroy his kingdom, his crime would be truly infinite, all will grant. But to desire and attempt this, and do that which would certainly effect it, were it not prevented by a superior power, is to be guilty of the same crime, so far as the criminal is concerned, and therefore must be infinitely great, and deserve the same punishment as if the effect had actually followed. The infinite magnitude of the crime, in this case, does not in the least degree depend upon the greatness of the criminal, or the degree of existence of which he is possessed.

Ans. 3. Agreeably to this, when a crime is committed, men do not first inquire into the greatness or smallness of the perpetrator, in order to determine the magnitude of the crime; but consider the nature of the crime, and the injury done, and who is injured, etc. If an abject, dependent slave burns his master's house, and destroys him and his whole family, or attempts

to do it, his inferiority and dependence on his master do not extenuate his crime in the judgment of men, but rather aggravate it, and no one will offer this as a plea in his favor, or as a reason for a mitigation of his punishment.

And here it may be observed, that it is equally unreasonable, and contrary to the common sense and practice of men, to say that an infinite crime cannot be committed in the short space of human life, and that men cannot deserve endless punishment for the sins of a few years; for, as the infinity of the crime does not depend on the greatness of the offender, so neither does it depend on the length of time in which it is perpetrated. In judging of crimes, and the degree of punishment they deserve, men do not inquire what length of time was spent in committing them; but what is the nature of them, and what is done. And men are condemned to death, or imprisonment during life, for crimes which were perpetrated in a few minutes.

Obj. 2. It is said, if every sin be an infinite evil, a crime of infinite magnitude, then all crimes must be equal; for none can be greater than infinite; which is contrary to reason and Scripture.

Answer. This consequence does not follow from the doctrine of the infinite evil of sin, as it has been stated. Two crimes may be both infinite in their criminality and ill desert, as committed against God, and yet, in other respects, one may be greatly aggravated and criminal above the other, being committed against more light and greater warnings, and an abuse of greater favors. They both deserve endless punishment, but one deserves a greater degree of punishment than the other. It is easy to conceive two persons deserving and suffering endless punishment, and yet one deserving and suffering a much greater degree of pain or punishment than the other. And is it not as easy to conceive of two persons being infinitely guilty, as rebels against the Monarch of the universe, and yet, in other respects, the rebellion of one be much more criminal than that of the other? This may be illustrated by the following similitude: Two cords or cylinders extended without end, and, in this respect, both equally infinite, may be of very different diameters, and, in that respect, one much larger than the other.

Obj. 3. If sin be an infinite evil because committed against an infinite object, then the virtue and holiness of creatures must be infinitely good, excellent, and praiseworthy, because exercised towards the same infinite object, which is too absurd to be admitted.

Answer. This consequence does by no means follow.

Creatures can do more mischief, by rebellion, and take more from God, than they can do good, or give to him, by their obedience. Here there is an infinite difference. It has been shown that sin takes all from God, and in its very nature and tendency destroys all the good in the universe, and would actually do it, were it not counteracted by omnipotence, infinite wisdom, and goodness; but the obedience and holiness of creatures is not to be estimated by the object towards which it is exercised, but by the subject, by him who exercises it, or the degree and quantity given to God. All that a finite creature can give is but finite; he can give no more than himself, and therefore what he gives is infinitely short of infinite — it is as nothing compared with the object towards which it is exercised, or to whom it is given.

Obj. 4. Though God be infinitely great, excellent, and worthy, yet finite minds can have no conception of that which is infinite. The infinity of God is altogether inconceivable to them, and out of their sight, and all their ideas must be limited. But that of which they can have no idea or conception can have no influence on the mind, and therefore cannot increase the obligation of creatures so as to render it greater than if the object was finite; consequently, a creature cannot be under infinite obligations from God's infinite greatness and excellence.

Answer. It is certainly not true that a finite mind can have no conception of an infinite being different from that which he has of one who is finite; because this is contrary to our experience in the consciousness of the ideas that are in our own minds. If men could have no idea of that which is infinite different from that which they have of a finite object, they could not reason, nor speak an intelligible word about it, which the objector himself thinks he can do, and is actually doing it while he is making the objection. And if we consult our own feelings, we find that we feel otherwise towards that which we conceive to be infinite than we could if we thought it was not so. The instance before us will sufficiently prove this. Are we not conscious that we ought to be affected with the infinite being and perfection of God, inexpressibly otherwise than towards any finite being? And if so, then his infinity, or his being infinitely great and good, brings an obligation on us to respect and love him, which we could not be under were he not infinite. And if that which is infinite, viz., infinite greatness, authority, and excellence, binds us, and the greatness of the obligation arises from the infinity of the object, then it must be an infinite obligation.

When we think of future life and happiness, we easily and necessarily distinguish between temporary and endless happi-

ness, and prefer the latter to the former feeling, in some sense, the infinite difference. And when we attend to infinite or endless punishment, and argue for or against it, we feel that this is infinitely more dreadful than any finite evil, and cannot but dread it unspeakably more, and be sensible that it affords an inexpressibly stronger motive not to rebel against God than any finite punishment can; and that it is infinitely greater folly and madness to provoke God to cast us into such punishment than to expose ourselves to one infinitely less. Therefore, the reason and experience of every man, if properly attended to, will teach him that the objection is without foundation.

The evidence that sin is properly an infinite evil, and has in its nature infinite ill desert, has now been considered, and objections have been examined and obviated; and the reader is to judge whether it may not be proved, even to a demonstration, that all sin deserves infinite or endless punishment. But as the infinite evil of sin appears from another consideration, it may be further observed, —

6. The atonement which has been made for sin, in order to the sinner's being pardoned, shows that there is infinite ill desert in sin.

They who acknowledge the divinity of Christ, and, consequently, his infinite greatness and worthiness, must also acknowledge that the atonement he has made for sin, by his obedience and sufferings, has infinite worth and merit, and is as great and considerable as the person who gave himself to be the propitiation for the sins of men. But if sin be not an infinite evil, then this atonement is infinitely more and greater than was necessary in order to open the way for the pardon of it; and the Mediator is infinitely greater and more worthy than it was necessary he should be, in order to make atonement for sin. One end of the atonement which Christ made for sin was, to show what evil there is in sin, and its ill desert. But this is every way sufficient to atone for sin which has infinite ill desert; therefore, this declares sin to be an infinite evil, or to deserve infinite or endless punishment. Consequently, to deny that there is infinite evil in sin, is, in effect, to deny the divinity of our Savior, or the truth which is declared in the atonement which he has made for sin.

It being thus evident, beyond all contradiction, that all sin is infinitely criminal, and deserves endless punishment, so that God may justly inflict it, and must do it, if he lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and punishes sinners according to their desert, it hence appears further evident and certain, that this punishment will be inflicted on all who die in their sins, from those passages of Scripture which

declare that God will reward them according to their works, and inflict a punishment answerable to their desert.

This is often and abundantly asserted in Scripture. From many instances of this, the following are selected: "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." (Isa. iii. 11.) "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them after the work of their hands; render to them their *desert*." (Ps. xxviii. 4.) "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. xvi. 27.) "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." (Rom. ii. 5.) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) "And the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12.) "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii. 12.)

All sin deserves endless punishment; this is the proper wages of sin, and God may most justly inflict it. God has said, in his word, that he will punish sinners in the future state, according to their ill desert; therefore, they will be punished forever.

Secondly. It must be considered whether any good end can be answered by inflicting an endless punishment on creatures.

If no good end can be answered by thus punishing, and if it be not, all things considered, necessary for the good of the whole that any creature should be made miserable forever, then it is not consistent with wisdom and goodness to inflict such a punishment upon any, though they may deserve it, and no injustice would be done to them by inflicting it. The infinitely wise and good Governor of the world always has some wise and good end in all he does, and never punishes his creatures merely for the sake of punishing, or only to make them miserable. This is strongly asserted by God himself, when he says, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" and, therefore, we may be sure he will not punish them forever, though they deserve it, unless it be necessary to prevent greater evil and answer the best and most important purposes.

But if endless punishment, infinitely dreadful as it is, be necessary to answer the highest and best ends, and to promote the greatest good of the whole, and is an important and essential part of the most wise and benevolent administration in the government of the world, then it is not only perfectly consistent with infinite goodness, but it is the dictate and exercise of goodness itself; and not to inflict this punishment, must be infinitely disagreeable and crossing to unlimited goodness, and demonstrate the want of benevolence. On this supposition, then, all the objections which have been with such confidence urged against endless punishment, from the goodness of God, as being inconsistent with that, fall to the ground, and appear highly unreasonable, childish, and absurd.

We are, indeed, poor and very inadequate judges of the ends and designs of God in all his administrations, in our present situation and in this very imperfect and sinful state, in which it is no uncommon thing for men to call God's wisdom and goodness in question, and say, His ways are not equal; therefore, though we were not able to see why there is to be endless punishment, and understand what wise and good ends God designs to answer by it, yet, since he has revealed to us that he will punish the wicked forever, it would be very unbecoming, yea, intolerable arroganee, for men to say no good end can be answered by it, or even doubt of the wisdom and goodness of this part of the divine administration.

But we are not left wholly in the dark with regard to this part of God's ways. In the sober exercise of our reason, assisted by divine revelation, we are able to justify God in punishing the wicked forever, and to see and rejoice in some of the infinitely important, wise, and good ends which will be answered by this awful, tremendous branch of the divine government, in which God will do terrible things in righteousness, so that the great good that shall be produced by it will infinitely overbalance and swallow up all the evil.

The following considerations will be sufficient, it is presumed, to illustrate and establish this point:—

I. All will grant it is not only just that criminals should be punished according to their deserts, but it is an expression of wisdom and goodness in a governor or judge thus to punish them, when this is suitable and necessary to maintain authority, law, and government, and deter others from the like crimes; and in this case, to refuse or neglect to punish, can proceed from nothing but a defect in true benevolence and goodness. Punishments are, therefore, found necessary in human government, in order to prevent greater evil, and promote the public good; so that every true friend to the public

and the greatest common good must be a friend to such punishments.

And who can think himself able to determine that eternal punishment is not proper and necessary, as a means, to answer these ends in the divine government, which is infinitely extended and everlasting? And if he cannot certainly determine such punishments to be unnecessary and useless, he has no warrant to conclude it is not perfectly agreeable to infinite goodness to inflict it. Why is it not as much suited, and as necessary, as a means to restrain creatures from sin, as any kind or degree of punishments in human governments? Who dare say, or think, that the punishment of the fallen angels, who are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, has had no influence on the angels who have not sinned, and has not been a means of preserving and confirming them in obedience? And though it be certain that the redeemed from among men will, after they are made perfect, continue in obedience and holiness forever, yet this will not be effected without means, and this may, and doubtless will be one, even the everlasting punishment of the wicked, the smoke of whose punishment will rise up in their sight forever and ever. No punishment but an endless one can answer this end. God ordered punishments in Israel, even the greatest that perhaps could be inflicted in this world, viz., that transgressors should be publicly stoned to death, that others might hear, and fear, and hereby be restrained from sin. Endless punishment may be as necessary in the future state to answer the same end.

II. It is desirable, and of the greatest importance, that all the divine perfection — his whole character and glory, even all that is amiable and excellent in God — should be acted out and displayed in the sight of his creatures, that his friends may be under the best advantage to see it, and enjoy God, and adore and praise him forever. This is as desirable and important as it is that God should be glorified to the highest degree; for this is done only by such a manifestation and display of his excellence and perfections, and in the consequent love and praise of his creatures. And this is as desirable and important as the highest happiness of the servants of God, the members of his eternal kingdom; for their happiness must consist summarily in the knowledge and enjoyment of God — in beholding his glory, and loving and glorifying him. But they know and enjoy him no further than he is manifested to them in his glorious perfection by his works; and their happiness will be in degree answerable to this display of the divine perfections, and is promoted by every thing by which God is glorified.

But the eternal punishment of the wicked is suited to promote and answer these desirable and important ends, and is necessary in order to their being accomplished most perfectly, and to the highest degree. This will appear by descending to particulars.

1. The terrible majesty of God, and the infinite dreadfulness of his displeasure and wrath, could not be fully displayed and known, did he not inflict eternal punishment on any of his creatures who deserve it.

Terrible majesty and wrath are ascribed to God in the inspired writings, as included in his amiableness and glorious perfection, his absolutely perfect character, for which he is worthy to be loved and adored. And his terribleness and wrath are equal in degree to his infinite existence and capacity, and, therefore, are infinitely great and dreadful. And if it be agreeable and desirable that there should be a God of infinite terribleness and wrath, it is equally desirable that this should *appear*, and be discovered and displayed, in the works of God. But this cannot be done in any way or degree, unless it be by terrible acts, or works, by which evil is inflicted on creatures.* If there were no possible evil in the universe, and God never did or would inflict any evil on his creatures as a punishment for their sins, there could be no possible appearance of terrible majesty in God, or of any displeasure and wrath; for that being from whom no evil, no pain or suffering, ever did or ever will come, has no wrath, or any thing that is terrible or awful. And as God's terrible majesty appears, and is acted out, only by his inflicting evil, so this appears great in proportion to the evil inflicted. Therefore, infinite evil must be inflicted, in order to express the infinitely terrible majesty and wrath of God. Any finite evil or punishment will be no proper expression of infinite terribleness and wrath, but fall infinitely short of it. But endless punishment is a full and proper expression of this, as it is an evil infinitely terrible and dreadful, and can be inflicted by none but the infinitely powerful and terrible Jehovah, who only is able, in this way, to make a most glorious and eternal display of his infinite power and wrath. And is not the answering this

* The *threatening* of eternal punishment against the transgressors of the law of God is, indeed, an expression of infinite terror and wrath against sin, if it be supposed it may and will be executed on any; but if the punishment threatened be only a temporary one, it is no proper expression of the terrible majesty and wrath of God. And though endless punishment be threatened, yet if it be known that it will never be executed in any instance, it will stand for nothing, and be no expression of any thing terrible; because the evil, which alone is terrible, lies in the *execution* of the threatening, and not in the threatening itself, unconnected with the punishment threatened.

important end one good reason why the wicked should be punished according to their deserts? "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, has determined to punish these vessels of wrath, fitted to such a destruction — to punish them with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power?"

2. God's infinite displeasure and anger with sin and the sinner, and the opposition of his heart to them, are properly exhibited in punishing the sinner forever, but cannot be expressed by any temporary punishment.

Infinite hatred of that which is opposition to all good is necessarily implied in infinite benevolence and goodness, and, therefore, is essential to the divine character; and it cannot be perfect and infinitely excellent without it, but directly the contrary. It is, therefore, desirable and necessary that this should appear, and be gloriously displayed, in God's conduct towards sinners. One way to express this is in punishing the sinner; but this cannot be done by any punishment but an endless one, because the degree of hatred of sin manifested in punishing it is in proportion to the degree of evil inflicted in the punishment. An endless punishment, therefore, is necessary to answer this important end. A temporary punishment will be so far from expressing infinite opposition to sin, that it expresses the contrary, viz., that God is infinitely less displeased at sin than an infinitely perfect and good being must be; and, therefore, would be worse than no punishment, and really injure the divine character.

3. In the everlasting punishment of the wicked, the infinite dignity and worthiness of God, and excellence of his law and government, are expressed and asserted in a very advantageous and striking manner; and this is one important end and design of this punishment.

Sin is criminal, and the evil of it great, in proportion to the dignity, excellence, and worth of the Governor of the world, as has been shown. Therefore, so far as the evil of sin is discovered, in the same degree are manifested God's greatness, dignity, worthiness, and glory. But the everlasting punishment of the sinner will be, in some respects, the strongest possible expression of the infinite evil of sin, and, consequently, a bright and affecting manifestation of the infinite worthiness and excellence of God, and the sacredness of his law and government. By this punishment it will forever appear to angels and the redeemed — yea, to all intelligences — what an infinitely evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God; and by means of this, God will be eternally seen and exalted in his infinite greatness, worth, and excellence, as he could not be were there

no such punishment; and it will, consequently, be the occasion of joy and praise in heaven, by which God will be honored and exalted forever.

A finite punishment, which is punishing the sinner infinitely less than he deserves, would be so far from answering this end, that it would have a contrary tendency, and reflect dishonor on God, and represent him as infinitely less honorable and excellent than he is. It hence appears, that endless punishment is as important and necessary as is the most clear manifestation of God's infinite worthiness and glory, and his asserting and maintaining his own rights, dignity, and honor, and the infinite importance and excellence of his law and government, to the greatest advantage of the universe, himself, and the creation.

4. Endless punishment is suited, and necessary, to make the brightest everlasting display of the righteousness and goodness of God.

It has been observed that infinite anger and displeasure against sin is essential to infinite goodness; and it must be further observed now, that such displeasure and anger is goodness itself, opposing, and kindled up into wrath, against that which opposes and tends to destroy what infinite goodness seeks. Infinite goodness seeks the greatest good of the whole, and, therefore, must be infinitely displeased with that which sets itself against all good; therefore, the more this displeasure and anger is manifested, the greater is the manifestation of divine goodness. But this cannot be properly and fully manifested but by inflicting infinite evil on the obstinate, confirmed enemies of all good. Hence it appears, that the greater the evil is which is inflicted on the obstinate sinner, if it be just, the greater is the display of divine goodness; and, therefore, to inflict endless punishment on such who deserve it, is a display both of the righteousness and infinite goodness of God, which could not be made in any finite punishment.

If a subject turn enemy to a whole kingdom, and do all in his power to destroy both the king and the people, and obstinately persist in his rebellion, the king must be displeased and angry in proportion to his goodness, his benevolent regard to the highest good of his kingdom; and in this case, his goodness must be exercised and acted out, in expressing his displeasure, by punishing the obstinate offender; and to neglect to punish him, or to inflict a small and light punishment, unspeakably less than his crime deserves, would be so far from expressing any goodness, that it would demonstrate the want of it; and, on the contrary, punishing him according to his desert would be the highest evidence he could give, in this case, of his benevolence and goodness.

And why is not this equally true of the Governor of the universe? If it be, then endless punishment must be one essential part of his government, as necessary to display, in the clearest light, his infinite righteousness and goodness.

Thus it appears, from the view given of it under this head, that endless punishment will serve to manifest and display the divine perfections and character, and in what way and manner it will do this, and why it is necessary in order to answer this infinitely important end, so much to the glory of God, and consequently for the good and happiness of all who love him.

But that infinite goodness is exercised and displayed in punishing the wicked forever, will be more fully proved under the next head; where it will be particularly considered, as it respects and will promote the general good, the glory and happiness of the kingdom of God.

III. The eternal punishment of the wicked will many ways promote the highest good of the blessed, especially the redeemed from among men, and is the most proper and necessary means of their unspeakably greater degree of holiness and happiness forever than could otherwise take place; and, therefore, must be agreeable to infinite goodness, and a strong expression of it.

The exercise and manifestation of God's displeasure against his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people, in condemning and punishing them according to their deserts and evil deeds, and vindicating his servants and their cause, and saving and delivering them from the hand and power of their adversaries, causing them to triumph over all that injured them, is certainly an instance and expression of his righteousness and goodness. The Holy Scriptures every where represent it in this light, of which every person, attentive to his Bible, must be sensible. God, in vindicating the righteous cause of his servants, by delivering and saving them, and manifesting his high displeasure against their enemies, by condemning and punishing them as they deserve, exercises and displays his righteousness; and, at the same time this righteousness is nothing but kindness and mercy to his church and people; and the more his displeasure and anger towards his and their enemies is manifested in the greatness of the righteous punishment inflicted upon them, the greater is the expression of his goodness to them, and they are unspeakably more happy in the righteousness of God and in his love and favor to them, than they could have been had they not been thus vindicated and delivered, and their enemies had not been destroyed and punished with everlasting destruction; therefore, the righteousness of God, as it respects this case, is often spoken of in

Scripture as including his goodness; and righteousness and salvation are words frequent used as synonymous, as every careful reader of his Bible must have observed. The following passages, among a multitude of others, serve to illustrate these observations: "Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape. Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul. But I will yet praise thee more and more. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day." (Ps. lxxi. 2, 13, etc.) "For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul." (Ps. cxliii. 11, 12.) "By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation." (Ps. lxv. 5.) "Rejoice, O ye nations, his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." (Deut. xxxii. 43.)

Therefore, the divine vengeance and eternal punishment that shall be inflicted on the wicked is represented in Scripture to be in the clear and full view of the redeemed and inhabitants of heaven, as a means of exciting and greatly increasing their love, joy, and praise. Speaking of the wicked, he says, "God shall destroy thee forever. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him." (Ps. lii. 5, 6.) "He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." (Ps. lviii. 9, 10.) "Render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their bosoms, their reproach wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. So we, thy people, will give thee thanks forever." (Ps. lxxix. 12, 13.) "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked." (Ps. xci. 8.) "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." (Isa. lxvi. 24.) "And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." (Rev xiv. 10.) "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." (Rev. xviii. 20.) "After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath

avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up forever and ever." (Rev. xix. 1, etc.)

None, surely, will dispute the goodness of God in punishing his enemies, and the enemies of his church and kingdom, so far, and as long, as shall be necessary to secure and promote the best interest and highest happiness and glory of all who belong to this kingdom; for that goodness itself should do this, is agreeable to common sense and reason. And this is asserted in the Holy Scripture. God there represents himself as giving people and nations up to ruin and destruction, for the sake of his church, as the effect and expression of his love and goodness. "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." (Is. xliii. 3, 4.) In these words there is reference to the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, for the sake of Israel, that they might be delivered to the greatest advantage to themselves, as an example of what God would yet do for his church. And when we see Moses and that people rejoicing and praising God, for his goodness in overthrowing and taking vengeance on his and their enemies in such a signal and dreadful manner, we approve of it as reasonable, for it was, viewed in all its connections and consequences, a wonderful act of divine goodness. Therefore it is celebrated as such, and made matter of solemn, joyful praise to God in Ps. cxxxvi. "To Him that smote Egypt in their first born; for his mercy endureth forever. To Him which divided the Red Sea into parts, and made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for his mercy endureth forever. But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for his mercy endureth forever."

And if this was such a remarkable instance of God's goodness and mercy, thus to punish and destroy Pharaoh and the Egyptians, for the sake of his church, to promote their good and happiness, when he could have delivered them without this destruction, but not so much to his glory and their advantage, and in this God made a display of his glorious character and infinite goodness, as matter of admiration, joy, and praise to his church, and to be celebrated forever; then it is equally an instance of his goodness, yea, an infinitely greater and more remarkable instance of it, and proportionably brighter display of his glorious character, and greater matter of eternal joy and praise, to punish forever the impenitent enemies of his redeemed church, this being necessary, in order to promote

their highest good, to make their redemption most complete and glorious, and raise them to the greatest height of felicity and glory.

It is now to be more particularly considered and shown how the everlasting punishment of the wicked is suited, and even necessary, to answer these ends.

It has been already observed and shown how well suited and necessary endless punishment is, to make a full and most glorious display of the divine character, in the view of the blessed. In this will be seen, as could not be seen so clearly and to such advantage by any other medium, or without this, the infinite greatness, power, and terrible majesty of JEHOVAH; and also his infinite excellence and worthiness, and his hatred and displeasure, his indignation and wrath against sin, and his infinite benevolence and goodness, to which sin is opposed. The smoke of their torment shall ascend up in the sight of the blessed forever and ever, and serve, as a most clear glass, always before their eyes, to give them a constant, bright, and most affecting view of all these. And all this display of the divine character and glory will be in favor of the redeemed, and most entertaining, and give the highest pleasure to all who love God, and raise their happiness to ineffable heights, whose felicity consists summarily in the knowledge and enjoyment of God. This eternal punishment must therefore be unspeakably to their advantage, and will add such immense degrees of glory and happiness to the kingdom of God, as inconceivably to overbalance all they will suffer, who shall fall under this righteous punishment, and render it all, in this view and connection, an infinite good. But it will further appear how useful and necessary the endless punishment of the wicked is, to the highest good and happiness of the redeemed, and all the friends of God, by attending to the following particulars: —

1. The eternal existence of sin, in all its horrors, acted out without restraint, with the infinite evil which is the natural and just consequence of it, taking place in the sight of the inhabitants of heaven, will serve to manifest and illustrate the beauty, excellence, and worth of holiness, and the happiness of all holy beings, and forever brighten the character of God and all his friends, and render the blessed unspeakably more sensible of their happiness, and of the beauty and happiness of each other, than they could be if there were no such contrast.

It is well known that contraries illustrate each other, and that the greatest beauty cannot appear to the best advantage without a shade; that deformity gives a lustre to beauty, and

evil magnifies and sweetens the contrary good. This contrast will take place to the highest possible degree, and to the greatest advantage forever, by endless punishment, and cannot be without it; therefore it is necessary to the highest happiness and glory of heaven.

2. The eternal punishment of the wicked, in the sight of the redeemed, will serve, incessantly, to keep fresh in their view the infinite evil of sin, and, in the most effectual, lively manner, teach them and make them feel their own infinite ill desert, and the infinitely evil case in which they should have been, had God treated them according to their deserts, and so keep in clear and constant view the infinite guilt and misery from which they have been redeemed, and maintain in their minds a lively, growing sense of all this. There are many other ways in which they are and will be taught these things, but this will add great instruction, which they could not have without it, and it is better suited than any other to keep up their attention, and give them a more lively, constant, affecting apprehension and sense of them. It is of great importance, and necessary, that the redeemed should be under the best advantage to see these truths, in order to their glorifying God in the best manner, and enjoying the highest happiness. For, —

3. This is necessary in order to their most clearly seeing, and celebrating to the highest degree, the goodness of God, his astonishing grace and mercy in their redemption. Had there been no sin, guilt, and misery, there could have been no such thing as redeeming love and grace ever known or thought of by creatures; and this is great in proportion to the greatness of the guilt, vileness, ill desert, and misery of the sinner, and the former cannot be known any farther than the latter are discovered and seen; therefore, redeeming love and goodness can be no farther seen and celebrated by the redeemed than they realize their ill desert and the infinite guilt and misery from which they are redeemed. In the light of this only is seen the goodness and sovereign grace of God to them in their redemption; and in proportion to their sight and sense of this will they feel and adore the goodness of God to the redeemed, and their hearts glow with the most sincere, sweet gratitude and joy, while they give all the praise and glory to God, for the distinction made between them and those who in their sight are forever unutterably miserable; and their enjoyment and happiness, their love, gratitude, and praise, will rise in proportion to their view and sense of God's infinite, astonishing goodness and distinguishing sovereign grace to them and all the redeemed. Therefore, while they

behold the damned, in all their sin and awful misery, and doomed thus to suffer without end, and this will be fully in their sight, it will be the occasion of their rising proportionably high in their exercises of love and praise, and in the sweetest sense of redeeming love and grace. And in them will be most completely fulfilled the last words of the prophet Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." The inhabitants of heaven, while they are worshiping God, shall have in full view the men that for their transgressions are cast into endless burnings, and this sight will give them most clear and affecting apprehensions of the infinite evil of sin, and the just desert of it; and in this light they will abhor sin and the sinners, approve of God's righteous judgments, and see and adore the infinite goodness and astonishing grace, by which they are redeemed from this infinite depth of sin and misery, which will animate them in all their worship and praises, and unspeakably add to their increasing felicity.

The apostle Paul sets the punishment of the wicked exactly in this light. "What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory?" (Rom. ix. 22, 23.) Here one end of God's showing his wrath and making his power known in the eternal punishment of the wicked is represented to be, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy; that is, that he might, by this means, make known to the redeemed the riches of his glorious grace exercised towards them in their salvation.

4. The endless punishment of the wicked being always in the sight of the redeemed, will serve to manifest to them as nothing else can, and keep constantly in their view, the power, dignity, worthiness, love, and grace of the Redeemer, who was able and willing to redeem them from such a state of sin and punishment, of infinite guilt and wretchedness; or, it will make a bright and eternal display of the glorious character and infinite worth of the Mediator.

They who suppose it would not be just to punish sinners with everlasting destruction, or that it is inconsistent with the goodness of God to punish them forever, make redemption a very small and inconsiderable matter. It is really, according

to this, redemption from little or no evil, as it was nothing very great to make atonement for sins which did not deserve infinite evil, and which could not be punished with everlasting destruction consistent with the goodness of God, and which his goodness obliged him to pardon, and so make the sinner happy, had there been no Redeemer; for men cannot be redeemed from evil which they do not deserve, or which cannot be inflicted on them consistent with the goodness of God. This sinks and hides the character of a Redeemer, and at once reduces redemption to very little or nothing. The actual existence of eternal punishment, in the sight of all intelligent creatures, will serve to confute these unworthy notions of God and of redemption, and is necessary in order to do it most effectually, and to set the Redeemer in an infinitely more important and glorious light forever. His infinite greatness and worth, the value and preciousness of his blood, appear in that, by his sufferings and obedience unto death, he could atone for such sins, and deliver from such punishment, and merit and procure pardon and favor for such infinitely guilty, ill-deserving creatures. And the almighty power and wonderful condescension, love, and grace of Christ will appear in a most affecting light, in his being able and willing to pluck such vile, obstinate sinners from those everlasting burnings, and will, by this punishment, be kept in fresh remembrance, and cause his glorious character and works to be more and more known and celebrated forever.

And all this will be in favor of the redeemed, and will add unspeakably to their happiness; for the more glorious Christ appears to them, the more his dignity and worth come into their view, and the greater their redemption appears to be, and the clearer sight they have of the love and grace of the Redeemer, and the more indebted and obliged they are to him, and the higher he is exalted in their salvation, so much the more happy they must be, and with proportionably greater sweetness and joy will they forever sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, forever and ever."

Upon the whole, it appears, from the view we have had of this subject, so far from being inconsistent with the goodness of God to punish sinners forever, that the ends of divine goodness are answered by this to the highest possible degree, and as they could not be without it, or in any other possible way; so that it is utterly inconsistent with infinite goodness not to punish them thus. This eternal punishment reflects such light on the divine character, government, and works, especially

the work of redemption, and makes such a bright display of the worthiness and grandeur of the Redeemer, and of divine love and grace to the redeemed, and is the occasion of so much happiness in heaven, and so necessary in order to the highest glory and greatest increasing felicity of God's everlasting kingdom, that, should it cease, and this fire could be extinguished, it would, in a great measure, obscure the light of heaven, and put an end to great part of the happiness and glory of the blessed, and be an irreparable detriment to God's eternal kingdom, most contrary to infinite wisdom and goodness. And, however great an evil the endless misery of so many millions is, in itself considered, yet, it being not only just, but the necessary means of such infinite glory and happiness to the kingdom of God, in this view, and in comparison with this, it sinks into nothing, and is wholly absorbed, as to the evil of it, and lost in the unspeakable glory and felicity of which it is the occasion, and is, on the whole, most desirable, and really becomes, in this connection, an important good, essential to the perfection of the divine government and the highest glory and happiness of God's eternal kingdom. How inconsiderate and unreasonable, then, must they be who disbelieve the doctrine of endless punishment, and oppose it as inconsistent with infinite goodness! *

* Some have argued from the aversion of a tender parent or fond mother to the pain and sufferings of their children, by being cast into the fire, etc., and from the desire that men profess to have that all men should be saved, that these have more goodness than they ascribe to God who believe he will cast multitudes of his creatures into everlasting burnings; and hence infer that endless punishment is inconsistent with infinite goodness.

If there were any weight or propriety in this way of arguing, it proves that God never did, nor ever will, inflict any evil on his creatures as much as it does that he will not punish them forever. It proves, for instance, that he did not rain fire and brimstone on the inhabitants of Sodom, and cause them, both old and young, to welter in the keenest anguish till they expired; and that he does not inflict those excruciating pains and tortures on children and others, which tender parents and friends often behold with the utmost aversion, distress, and anguish. And since this way of arguing is as much against known facts as it is against endless punishment, it is certainly just as consistent with the existence of the latter as of the former, and therefore is not worthy of the least regard. And when any one pretends to argue in this way, he discovers himself to be a very shallow reasoner, or a stranger to uprightness and honesty. Had Abraham reason to think he had more goodness than his Maker, because he was shocked at the proposal of destroying the inhabitants of Sodom, and interceded for them?

When parents in Israel had a disobedient son, they were commanded to bring him forth into public, and witness against him, that he might be stoned to death. (Deut. xxi. 18–21.) If the parent's love and tenderness towards their children led them to refuse to execute this law, or to look upon it hard and cruel, and reluct at the thought of having one of their children put to death in this manner, had they reason to think the God of Israel severe and cruel, or that he had less goodness than themselves?

A benevolent man may wish and pray for the salvation of all those whom he sees, or that do exist in the world, as their salvation is, in itself considered, de-

SECTION V.

Questions and Answers relating to the Doctrine of Endless Punishment.

Upon the subject, as it has been now stated, the following queries may arise in the minds of some, which ought to be answered: —

I. Though it be granted that the blessed will receive great advantage by the eternal destruction of such vast numbers of the human race, and there will be unspeakably more happiness in the kingdom of God than could be were there no such punishment, yet how can it be consistent with goodness, or even impartial justice, to make part of the human race happy at the expense of the rest, and by means of their eternal misery? Would it not be much better for all to be free from misery, and have a less and moderate share of happiness, than for some to be so very miserable forever, as the means of the greater happiness of others? And would not this be more agreeable to a benevolent, generous mind? Would it not much rather choose to have a less share of happiness, than to enjoy more at such amazing expense and cost of his fellow-creatures, even their everlasting misery?

Ans. 1. Since they who shall be miserable forever do deserve this punishment, neither they nor any creature will have any reason to complain because they are thus punished; and if God can, by executing justice on them, answer great and important ends to himself, his government and kingdom, which could not be obtained, but must be forever lost, without it, and can render his kingdom unspeakably more happy and glorious than it could otherwise be, surely all true friends to God and his kingdom, who desire and seek the greatest good of the whole, must be pleased and greatly rejoice in it.

sirable, and he knows not that this is inconsistent with the general good. But if any one, or a number, should be pointed out to him, who deserve to perish, and he should know that this was necessary for the glory of God and the good of his kingdom, he would not ask nor desire that they should be saved, unless his benevolence were very imperfect. When a king or judge condemns a criminal to death, and sees the sentence executed because it is necessary for the public good, is not this an act of goodness? Or shall we think the tender mother, wife, or child of the criminal, who wishes, and, in agonies of pity, implores, his pardon and reprieve, and cannot bear the thought of his execution, to have and show more benevolence and goodness than the king or judge? And if these should boast of their benevolence, and represent the wise and good judge as inexorably cruel, they would appear to the friends of good government and the public good just as do the advocates for universal salvation when they boast of this as the *benevolent plan*, and represent the opposers of it as uncharitable, inhuman, and cruel.

2. Since the good of which endless punishment will be the means will be so vastly great as immensely to overbalance the evil, so that it will be as nothing compared with the good, every degree of evil producing millions of millions of degrees of good and happiness, and there would be, on the whole, infinitely less good should this punishment cease, it must be the dictate and choice of infinite benevolence thus to punish; and that must be a very partial, imperfect, defective goodness, which, in this case, would give up the greatest general good for the sake of an infinitely less good to some unworthy individuals. Such a disposition is not true benevolence, but the contrary. This has been observed before, and it is presumed is evident beyond all possible doubt. Therefore,—

3. The generous, benevolent mind, which desires and seeks the greatest good of the whole, the glory of God, and the greatest glory and happiness of his kingdom, must choose and be pleased with that just, eternal misery of the wicked, which is so neeessary to promote this to the highest degree, and the greater and more generous and benevolent the mind is, the more pleasure will it take in such a plan; and he only, whose heart is contracted, partial, and selfish, and consequently an enemy to the greatest general good, will object and oppose it.

All will allow there may be wisdom and goodness in subjecting a person to a great degree of deserved evil, in order to promote his unspeakably greater good, so that the evil he suffers becomes the means of his immensely greater happiness forever, and that this is vastly preferable to no suffering and misery. In this case, therefore, the misery suffered is, on the whole, a good; it being the necessary means of making him unspeakably more happy than he could have been, had he not suffered. For that which is the necessary means of so much good, though in itself undesirable and evil, is, in this connection, a real good.

This may serve to illustrate the case before us. Here, indeed, the person who suffers does not enjoy the good of which his sufferings are the means, but the happy part of the community. Nevertheless, when we consider that they who are miserable suffer justly, and this becomes the means of infinitely greater good to the whole, we must be sensible that, as in the case proposed, suffering is much preferable to no suffering, and, on the whole, becomes a great good; it must be so in the case under consideration. For the evil is, in itself, no greater from those particular persons suffering, and not others; and the good, of which those sufferings are the means, is as great and desirable as if they who enjoy it had themselves been the subjects of the sufferings, were this possible.

II. It may be queried, whether it be not undesirable, and must not be considered as an unhappiness, that all this good cannot take place without any suffering. Would not this be infinitely better and more agreeable, if it were possible? And surely this is possible with God. If it be not, must not this be crossing and the source of uneasiness and regret to the infinitely good Being, and to all his benevolent friends?

Ans 1. It is certain that God hath taken this method to promote the highest good of the universe, by ordering things so that a great degree of sin and suffering should exist in order to it. Infinite benevolence seeks the greatest good of the whole; therefore, if this could be effected as well, and to as great a degree, without any sin or suffering, God would have prevented the existence of these; consequently, all this sin and misery do take place because they are necessary to the greatest good of the whole, so that it could not be obtained in any other way.

All must allow that God will answer some good end by all the sin and misery in the world, which could not be so well answered without them; or confess that his government and administrations are imperfect and unwise; and if the evil that has actually taken place is designed, and necessary to answer the most important and best end, then it may be as necessary, for the same reason, that it should continue forever, to answer the same end to the highest degree; and that it is so, and the reason of it, has been shown above. This, therefore, being a known fact, cannot be disputed; and we may hence conclude there is nothing undesirable and disagreeable in it; yea, we are certain there is not, if it be desirable that the greatest good of the whole should take place.

2. Infinite power is not an ability to effect impossibles, or to make contradictions consistent; for not to be able to do this is no defect of power, as these are not the objects of power any more than sound is the object of sight; and there is nothing disagreeable in this, but, on the contrary, it would be undesirable there should be any such power, were it possible.

It is impossible that a creature should be made capable of enjoying an infinite degree of happiness in a limited duration —just as impossible as it is that he should be a God; nor can creatures be happy unless some method be taken, and means used, to make them so. Should any one ask why every creature is not made to enjoy as great a degree of happiness as his Creator, and why there are not millions of creatures more than there are, or ever will be, (for God cannot create so many that this question may not be asked — "Why did he not create more?") and why they might not all be thus

happy, without any way being taken, or means used, to make them so, and whether it will not be eternally considered as an unhappiness, and matter of grief and regret, that all this cannot be, he may be answered, that all these are, in their own nature, absolutely impossible, as they imply a contradiction, and, therefore, not desirable, but the contrary; for what is impossible, and implies a contradiction, is not desirable, and, therefore, this can give no uneasiness to a perfect mind.

And is not this a sufficient and satisfactory answer to the query proposed? A Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness can be under no restraint; and the highest possible good of the universe will be effected by ways and means that are most wise and best. This is all that a perfectly good mind can wish and desire; and, therefore, there can be no possible ground of the least uneasiness to such a mind, but every thing is perfectly suited to give it all the enjoyment and happiness that can be desired.

III. If it be granted that endless punishment were necessary, and would answer all the good ends which have been mentioned had there been no Mediator and Redeemer, yet, since the Son of God has, in the human nature, suffered the curse, even that which, considering his infinite greatness and dignity, is equivalent to the eternal sufferings of men, — so that God may be just, and maintain and honor his own character, law, and government, in pardoning and granting complete salvation to sinners for Christ's sake, and in his sufferings may be seen clearly displayed all those things that have been mentioned as manifested in the endless punishment of sinners, — and since the merits of Christ are as sufficient for the salvation of *all*, as of only a part of the human race, — since all this is true, it is queried, Why is it necessary or proper that any of mankind should suffer eternal punishment? Are not all the ends of suffering answered in the sufferings of Christ? What need, then, is there of endless punishment?

Answer. It is granted that the mediation and sufferings of Christ have so far answered the law, and the end of the punishment therein denounced against sin, that God may, consistent with his character and law, pardon and save every one of the human race who believes in Christ, being heartily pleased with his mediatorial character and works, as by his sufferings for sinners the same and as much regard and honor is paid to the divine character, law, and government, as if they had suffered forever; and hereby are manifested the infinite evil of sin, and the infinite ill desert and misery of the sinner, and the wonderful love and grace of God; and, therefore, in this view and sense, what Christ hath done and suf-

fered for man is as sufficient for the salvation of any one as of another, and for all as for part of the human race.

Nevertheless, this does not lay God under the least obligation actually to save all; and it still remains for his infinite wisdom and goodness to determine this: whether all shall be saved, or only part of mankind; and if but part, how great a part, and what individuals shall be included in that number, so as shall, in the best manner and highest degree, answer the ends of redemption, and promote the greatest good of the whole.

And though the sufferings of Christ do lay a sufficient foundation for the salvation of sinners, and make a bright and glorious display of those truths which have been mentioned relating to the divine perfections, law, sin, etc., yet the eternal sufferings of some of the human race may be necessary to make and continue a manifestation of these things to the best advantage, and so as to promote the greatest happiness of the blessed; yea, in all respects as necessary as if Christ had not suffered; necessary in order to complete, or fully accomplish, the ends of Christ's sufferings; so that redemption by Christ would, without this, be very imperfect, as all the ends of divine wisdom and goodness could not be answered if all were saved. And that this is really so is abundantly evident from what has been said, concerning the ends that will be answered by eternal punishment, in the preceding section.

The sufferings of Christ are a peculiar and striking manifestation of the sacredness of the divine law, God's hatred of sin, and the infinite evil and malignity of it — a manifestation which could not have been so fully made, had not Christ suffered as he did. Nevertheless, the eternal sufferings of sinners are suited, in many respects, to instruct and affect creatures as the sufferings of Christ alone could not; and the former are necessary to be joined with the latter, that the display and instruction may be most full and complete. The sufferings of Christ were temporary, and soon over, and, though they never will be forgotten, yet they cannot be so clearly in view as the present, constant, endless sufferings of the wicked; and the latter will be the means of keeping up a more clear and fresh view of the former than could otherwise be, and, at the same time, will be a constant, eternal exhibition before their eyes of the infinite odiousness and misery of the sinner when sin has its natural and deserved course and issue, which is so necessary in order to a proper, full, and most affecting view of the power and worthiness of Christ, the efficacy of his mediation, the greatness of the salvation by him, and his infinite love and grace in dying to save sinners, which has been considered above.

It hence appears that the sufferings of Christ for sinners, and the abundant sufficiency of his merit for their salvation, render eternal punishment not the less necessary, but in all respects more so, and unspeakably more important and useful, as it is necessary to make this salvation most complete and glorious, and answers more important ends than it could had there been no salvation for sinners by a Mediator.

But this may be further illustrated by the following particulars: —

1. If all the human race were saved, it never could be seen, as now it will be, how exceeding perverse and obstinate men are in their sins. In the eternal destruction of men this will be set in the most clear and convincing light. God is using the greatest variety of means with men of different ages, nations, and capacities, and in different and various circumstances, suited in the best manner to influence them, and bring them to repentance, urging them by infinitely weighty arguments and motives to embrace the offered Savior, (which, by the way, could not be in any measure so strong and urgent, were there no eternal destruction for the disobedient,) and yet, in opposition to all these, they refuse the offered salvation, abuse and trample upon divine love and mercy and the Savior himself, and madly rush on to eternal perdition. This will make a most bright and endless discovery of the infatuation, madness and malignity of sin, and the obstinacy and vileness of the sinner, which must have remained in a great measure out of sight, and never could have been so fully known and realized by the saved, were there no awful instances of this, who shall suffer the consequences of it forever. If all did believe in Christ and accept of the offered salvation, it never could have been so fully known that men were obstinate and vile enough to slight this salvation and trample on Christ, under the greatest light and advantages, and perseveringly choose eternal destruction rather than submit to the Savior.

It is of the greatest importance that this should be seen forever, that the redeemed may have a constant and increasing sense of the nature of sin, and know how far they were from salvation, notwithstanding all possible means and advantages, and realize the infinite power and grace of Christ in their recovery; that they may give the glory to God which is due to him, and enjoy redeeming love and grace in its full extent, sweetness, and glory.

2. If all were saved, the real need and absolute necessity of an atonement for sin in order to the salvation of men would not appear in so clear a light as it will do in the eternal punishment of the impenitent. If all were saved, they would be

in some degree sensible of the need of this atonement; but it would not appear so clear and certain that there is no other possible way of salvation, and that all must have been miserable forever, had it not been for the atonement and redemption of Christ, as it now will, when all that slight and reject this atonement, through this life, actually perish forever, without any possible remedy.

3. If all mankind were saved, the sovereignty of divine grace in the salvation of men would not be so manifest as it now will be.

Indeed, grace or mere favor is, in its own nature, sovereign grace; that is, it is exercised towards those who have not the least claim or desert of it. And the further a creature is from any desert of the favor granted, and the more unworthy and ill deserving he is, and the more he has done to provoke displeasure and wrath, the more sovereign is the grace; and, therefore, the more the creature's ill desert appears, the more the favor granted appears to be mere sovereign grace, and the greater manifestation there is of the riches and glory of this.

But this will be made to appear in the strongest light to the redeemed, when they behold those in everlasting misery, as their just and deserved portion, who are no more ill deserving than themselves, and know that mere sovereign grace hath made the distinction, since, had it not been for this grace, they themselves would infallibly have run on to destruction, and been as sinful and miserable as those who are actually lost, notwithstanding the offers of salvation made to them, and the means and advantages they enjoyed. Nothing can be better suited to keep this in the clearest view forever than this actual distinction made by divine grace in saving some, while others are given over to deserved everlasting destruction. And without this, or were all saved, the manifestation of this would have been comparatively dark, and very imperfect.

From this view of the matter, it appears easy to see how important and necessary it is that all should not be saved, in order that the Redeemer and redemption might appear in their true greatness and splendor, and the highest manifestation of glorious, sovereign grace be made in the salvation of sinners, and the greatest happiness of the saved promoted; though, at the same time, it is not pretended that any are able to discern all the ends that divine wisdom and goodness will answer by this dispensation.

IV. If it be granted that it is necessary, in order to render the work of redemption most complete and glorious, and the redeemed happy to the highest degree, that all should not be saved, yet it is queried, why there should be so few saved,

and almost all mankind lost, notwithstanding all that has been done for the salvation of men. Surely it cannot be for the greatest good of the whole to have the most of mankind destroyed, and but few have the benefit of redemption.

Ans. 1. No man is in any measure able to determine what number or what proportion of the whole must be saved or lost, in order to answer the most important ends, the ends that have been mentioned to be obtained by endless punishment, and many more which are now out of our sight. If we knew the exact proportion between the saved and the lost, and that the former were few compared with the latter, this would be no more a ground of objection against the doctrine of endless punishment than if the proportion was directly the other way. And to suppose that the less number of those that shall be punished is so much the better, seems to be giving up the doctrine of endless punishment, and to suppose it would be, on the whole, best to have none lost. Though we are utterly incompetent judges in this matter, infinite wisdom can determine it, without a possibility of a mistake. God knows what proportion of the human race, even the exact number, and what individuals may be saved, consistent with the greatest good of the whole, and how many must be punished forever in order to answer the best and most important ends. And all have reason to acquiesce in his disposal, and to rejoice that it will be determined by infinite wisdom and goodness. And all will rejoice in this who are friends to righteousness, wisdom, and benevolence; that is, friends to God and his uncontrollable dominion. Man has no right or ability to judge what is best in this case, or what will in fact be the issue, any further than God hath revealed it in his Word.

Ans. 2. We have no reason to conclude from the Word of God that but few, or a very small part of mankind, will be saved; but there is reason to believe that many more of the human race will be happy than miserable.

It has indeed been believed by many, that the number of the redeemed will be very small compared with those who will perish, partly from several passages of Scripture, and partly from what has taken place in the world hitherto; as the church of Christ has been comparatively very small, and but few have appeared to walk in the narrow way which leadeth unto life. But when those Scriptures and this fact are carefully examined and compared with other parts of Scripture, it will doubtless appear that no such thing can be inferred, but the contrary.

Our Savior says, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And,

"Many are called, but few chosen." And he calls his disciples a little flock. Christ in these words speaks of the then present time, and of what took place at that time, and does not say that but few of mankind, compared with the whole, shall ever find the way to life, and be chosen to salvation, or that his church shall always be a little flock; but he has said the contrary. He represents his church by a "grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which, indeed, is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a great tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." And he likens it "unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Denoting that, though it was small in its beginning, it should increase and become great, and fill the world. And the same thing is represented in Daniel, by a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. And the same is expressed in the following words: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." According to this, the time is coming when all nations shall be the servants of Christ, and the world shall be full of his people, agreeably to many other prophecies of the same thing, too many to be recited here. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

They who have attended well to the Bible must be sensible that the time is yet to come in which salvation by Christ shall take place, as it never has yet done. His church shall flourish and fill the world, and Satan's kingdom be utterly destroyed in the earth; and this happy and glorious day of salvation shall continue a thousand years. In this thousand years of peace and prosperity, when the people shall be all righteous, mankind will naturally propagate and multiply as they never yet have done, and fill the whole face of the earth, so that there will be many thousand times more living in the world at one time than there ever yet have been. It is easy to show that, in such a state, many more people will exist in a thousand years than have existed before, yea, many thousands to one, supposing this thousand years shall be the seventh thousand years of the world, which supposition is agreeable to

Scripture. If the greater part that live in the preceding six thousand years do perish, yet if all, or most, who shall exist in the seventh thousand years shall be saved, there will, on the whole, be many more of mankind saved than lost; yea, it may be, many thousands to one. But as this does not so immediately affect the subject we are considering, it is needless to enlarge upon it here.

The reader has now the doctrine of endless punishment laid before him, as it is revealed and abundantly asserted in the Word of God; and the justice of this punishment, and necessity for it, in order to answer the most important purposes, to render the work of redemption most complete and glorious, and promote the highest good and happiness of the universe, so that it is a real good and necessary part of the most wise and benevolent plan; and, therefore, most pleasing to infinite goodness, and best suited to excite the joy and praise of every benevolent mind.*

* And in this light may be seen the absurdity of that enthusiastic harangue of Mr. Jeremiah White, who lived in the last century, lately published in Boston, (see "Salvation for all Men," p. 1–4,) which may well be considered as the very dregs of the enthusiasm and religious frenzy which took place, to so great a degree, in his day. He was himself so pleased and charmed with this scheme of universal salvation, that in a conceit of his own superior benevolence he caressed himself with fanatic complacence and joy, and then exclaims, "He is not a Christian, he is not a man, he hath put off the tenderness and bowels of a man, he hath lost humanity itself, he hath not so much charity as Dives expressed in hell, that cannot cry out, *This is good news, if it be true!*"

As Mr. White cannot now answer for himself, his voucher, who introduces this as an instance of the author's ingenuity, piety, and benevolence, and all the advocates for temporary future punishment, in opposition to endless, may be desired to answer and clear up the following difficulties, which seem to attend their scheme: —

If he who has any benevolence will be pleased with the news that there is no such thing as endless punishment, will he not be glad to hear that there is no future punishment at all? And will he not be sorry that there ever have been, and still are, so much sin and misery in the world? and must not this be matter of grief to him to all eternity, whenever he thinks of it? And why must not the infinitely benevolent Mind be in the same way affected with this to an infinitely greater degree?

According to this, it would be much best and most pleasing to the benevolent to have no such thing as sin or misery in the universe. Why, then, is there any such thing? How can it be accounted for, that they should take place under the all-perfect government of an infinitely benevolent Being?

If it is said, these have taken place under God's government, when he was able to have prevented their existence, in order to answer some good and important ends which could not be accomplished without them, so that it is, on the whole, best they should exist, as they have done, and will issue in the greatest general good, it will be then asked, if such a degree of sin and misery as has taken place, and will take place to the end of the world and after the day of judgment, in a long, though temporary punishment, be necessary to promote the highest general good, why may not endless punishment be as necessary, and more so, to promote the highest possible general good? Who is able to say, who dare say, it is not? If any presume to do it, let them answer what has been said above, to prove the contrary; and, which is of more importance, let

them show that it is not declared in sacred writ, or let them answer it to their Maker at the last day.

It is further and more particularly asked, why there will be any future punishment. What end will this great temporary evil answer?

If it be answered, that this is necessary in order to reclaim and bring to repentance those who in this life were obstinate and persevered in rebellion, it is still asked, why God does not, by the power of his spirit and grace, bring all to repentance and conversion in this life? He does it in some instances, and he is equally able to do it in every instance, and bring all to close with Christ in this world; why, then, does he not do it, and effectually prevent all that dreadful scene of sin and misery which must take place in a long punishment? Such a punishment has no more tendency to bring them to repentance than the means used with them in this world; yea, it may be made evident it hath not so much, if any; and it is certain no means will effect it, without divine influence, and God must, by this, convert them, after all, and save them by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Why, then, is not this always done in this life, if done at all, and all future punishment prevented?

If it be said, this future, temporary punishment is necessary for God to show his wrath against sin, and his justice in punishing the sinner according to his desert; and as he can deserve only a temporary punishment, when he has suffered that, he will be delivered. Mr. White says something like this, when he speaks of "all the methods which God uses in his holy and glorious wisdom and prudence, in giving way to the entrance of sin, and then inflaming the anguish of it by the law, that he may thereby have occasion to glorify his wrath against it, and his justice, and so make his way to the more glorious illustration of his grace and love in the close." This excites the following observations and questions: —

1. If sin deserves an endless punishment, then in order to God's showing his displeasure, so as "to glorify his wrath against it, and his justice," he must inflict such a punishment. To inflict an infinitely less punishment than the sinner deserves, will be so far from glorifying the wrath and justice of God, that it will make a contrary appearance, and look as if God hated sin infinitely less than he does, and that sin does not deserve endless punishment, and that justice is satisfied with something infinitely short of it. How, then, can God glorify his wrath against sin, and his justice, in punishing it, unless he inflict an endless punishment?

If the subject of a king should blaspheme him, and seek to ruin his whole kingdom, and the king should punish him only by laying a fine on him of one penny, would not the language of this be, that he looked on his character and kingdom to be worth no more than one penny, and that in this punishment was a proper expression of his wrath against the criminal, and a glorious exercise of justice, this being all he deserved? Would this be glory, or disgrace?

Let it be proved, then, that no sinner can deserve endless punishment, before any thing is said of God's glorifying his wrath and justice by a temporary punishment.

2. If sin deserves only a temporary punishment, then, when the sinner has suffered this, even as much as he deserves, justice is fully satisfied, and he has no more ill desert, and must, in justice, be delivered. How, then, does his deliverance and salvation make a "more glorious illustration of God's grace and love in the close" than if the creature had never sinned, and had not been punished? Yea, is there any grace and mercy manifested in this? Surely, no. For grace and mercy is favor showed to the ill deserving, and not doing what justice requires; and if the sinner has suffered all the punishment he deserved, so that his guilt and ill desert is entirely done away, and he has no more of it than Adam had when he was first created, what need has he of the atonement of Christ and salvation by him, any more than Adam had before he sinned? What need then was there of Christ, in order to the salvation of all men, and what hand or glory will he have in the deliverance and salvation of those who have suffered all they deserve for their sins?

These questions and observations arise from its being allowed and said, in

order to account for the sin and misery that have actually taken place, that God could have prevented their existence, but did not, because they are necessary to answer good and important ends. This is allowed by Mr. White, and many others, who deny the endless duration of future punishment.

But there are others who take another method to account for the introduction of sin and consequent misery, and their continuance in the world; and to make this consistent with divine goodness, while they deny that endless punishment is consistent with it, they say, God could not prevent sin and consequent misery, consistent with the moral agency and freedom of man; and, therefore, in consequence of creatures' being made and continued free agents, sin was introduced; and as the methods taken to reclaim men in this life are, in many instances, ineffectual, they will be punished in the future state, till they submit and obtain deliverance.

This notion is so inconsistent with the Bible, and contrary to all reason, that it is difficult to conceive how any man who has the use of these should embrace it, and rest satisfied. The Scriptures represent God as supreme, and infinitely above control, doing what he pleases in heaven and on earth, and having the hearts of men in his hands, directing and turning them as he pleases, even turning them from sin to holiness, and working in them to will and to do, etc.; and that God does all this consistent with their freedom and accountableness for all their moral exercises and conduct. And what reasonable man would choose to have a God who is at the control and beck of his creatures, not able to give them their rights and maintain his own supremacy, so that he is obliged, in a great degree, to give up his dominion into their hands, and suffer them to introduce that which he would with all his heart prevent, were he able?

But not to dwell on this, which is not directly to the present purpose, it is now to be inquired, whether this scheme is in any degree favorable to the doctrine of the salvation of all men.

If God could not prevent sin, consistently with the freedom of man, how can he recover men from sin when they have once fallen under the dominion of it, and not infringe on their freedom? If he could not keep sin out of the world, what evidence is there that he can clear the world of it, and put an end to the rebellion, after it has had such a mighty spread and continued so long? Is it not probable, yea, even certain, that it will continue forever, notwithstanding any thing he can do? Therefore, if it be certain that God does all he can to bring all men to holiness and happiness, what evidence is there that this will ever be effected? If all the means used with men in this world be not sufficient to bring them to repentance, and it is supposed God uses the best means, and takes the best and most likely methods, and does all he can to effect it, what evidence is there that he will ever be able to recover all men from sin, by any means whatsoever? Is it certain, is it probable, that any degree or length of future punishment will be sufficient to effect this, since all other more likely means fail? This cannot be. And if it was certain that future punishment would bring all men to repentance, what security can there be that they will not relapse into sin, and oblige their Maker to continue their punishment? and what end can there be of this, so long as God cannot prevent sin, consistent with the freedom of his creatures? There can be no possible security against sin and punishment without end, on this plan, unless God should annihilate all the moral agents he has made, and so put an eternal end to his moral government. Is not this a poor, miserable foundation upon which to build an assurance of the eternal happiness of all men?

Let the advocates for the salvation of all men give a fair and satisfactory answer to all these questions, and to what has been produced against this doctrine in the foregoing sheets, and remove all these difficulties from their scheme. Or, if they cannot do this, let them give up their dangerous notion, and admit the belief of endless punishment, and that scheme of divine truth, so consistent with the Word of God, and so plainly and abundantly inculcated there, which reflects such glory on the divine character, and gives a rational, satisfactory account of the introduction of sin and misery, under the most wise and happy government of JEHOVAH, and the continuance of them forever for the greatest good of the whole, and against which there can be no reasonable objection.

SECTION VI.

Inferences from the Doctrine of Endless Punishment.

I. The doctrine of endless punishment being thus established from the Holy Scriptures, and vindicated and supported by reason, it follows that all those doctrines, and that experimental or practical religion, which are inconsistent with this doctrine, are false and delusive.

If we were able to take a thorough, comprehensive view of the subject, and examine it without any prejudice and darkness, it would doubtless be found that no false scheme of religion, in doctrine or practice, can stand this test, and be reconciled in all its parts to this doctrine, but that all such schemes do clash with it, however ignorant of it they may be who embrace them, and attempt to blend this doctrine with those that do really oppose it. And it will appear that true religion, including principles and practice, — the religion of the Bible, and that only, — is, in every part, consistent with God's punishing the wicked forever, so as to bear a friendly aspect to, and truly approve it. By this test, then, every doctrine and all hearts may be tried.

Here many particular doctrines, and different schemes of practical religion, might be brought into view, and examined by this test; but this will be omitted, and only one general character of all false religion mentioned and tried by this rule, that is, *selfish* religion, as opposed to all disinterested public affection. It is easy to see that selfishness cannot be reconciled to eternal punishment on those grounds, and for the reasons, aside from which or were it not for them, it would be undesirable and not reasonable, viz., the glory of God and the greatest general good. As endless punishment is necessary to promote this, God approves of it, and has ordained it; but, in this view, it is wholly opposed to selfishness, for that pays no regard to the honor of God, or the general good, but seeks only a private interest; and, consequently, all selfish religion does oppose endless punishment. And it hence appears that true religion consists in that benevolence, and that public disinterested affection which is implied in it, which desires and seeks the glory of God, and the greatest public or general good, — so as to subordinate *all* to this, and be reconciled to *that*, and acquiesce in it, be it what it will, which is best suited to answer this end, — and opposes every thing so far as it appears to be opposed to this; and that every degree of that selfishness which is opposed to such benevolence is opposed to God, and all his institutions and ways.

II. It may be hence inferred that to believe and teach the salvation of all men is very dangerous and hurtful. This appears to be so, as it is contrary to the truth so clearly revealed in the sacred oracles; since every error, especially one so gross and of such magnitude, must be dangerous, and of an evil tendency.

They whose religious exercises, whose love to God, etc., have their foundation in a belief that there is no such thing as endless punishment, and that all mankind shall be happy forever, so that the belief of the contrary would put an end to all their love and religion, are certainly in a very dangerous way. All their religious affections, their love, hope, and joy, will perish forever when they are made to *know* that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; and they will be found enemies to the true God, and his wise administrations, and only fit to be cast into that everlasting fire. And all those whose hope of future happiness is wholly founded on a belief and confidence that none shall be miserable, are in a most dangerous situation. Their trust and confidence will perish; their hope is as the spider's web, and shall be as the giving up of the ghost. This delusion now shuts their ears, and fortifies them against all warnings adapted to excite their fears, and awaken them to fly from the wrath to come, and has a direct and mighty tendency to sink them down into carelessness and neglect of all religion, and to encourage them in worldly and vicious gratifications and pursuits, while they flatter themselves, and say, "We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our heart, and add drunkenness to thirst."

It is so evident, from reason and observation, that this is true of the doctrine that there is no punishment for the wicked in the future state, that not only they who believe their punishment will be endless, but those who think it will be temporary, though it may be long and dreadful, without hesitation pronounce the former a licentious, dangerous doctrine;* while they who hold the latter, say this has no such bad tendency.

* It may be added, that, on this principle, all oaths, or solemn appeals to God for the truth of what men say, which are so necessary in civil government, are perfectly useless; for he who sweareth falsely has no judge or future judgment to fear or regard, and will be as happy in the future state as he who feareth a false oath. And no degree of unfaithfulness, deceit, and unrighteousness, or indulgence of any lust whatever, will be the least disadvantage to a man after he leaves the body. And no fear of any evil after death can take place, to be the least restraint from putting an end to his own life, or the life of others; but the confident expectation of happiness in another world becomes a strong inducement to put himself, and those nearly connected with him, out of this world, especially when worldly circumstances and prospects are dark and disagreeable, that he may free himself and them from the evils of this life.

But, if this subject be properly considered, it will doubtless appear that the latter has the same, and an equally bad and dangerous tendency with the former.

We find that when sinners are awakened to a sense of their danger, and the evil case in which they are, so as to think in earnest of reformation and embracing the gospel, in order to salvation, it is always under some conviction and sense of *endless* misery as the certain consequence of persisting in their evil ways. And if they can be made to believe there is no such punishment, but that they shall certainly be happy forever, whatever be their character and conduct in this world, this will remove their great attention and pressing concern, and give them ease while they go on in their sins. And every person who has been in any degree properly attentive to his eternal interest, and will consult his own feelings, must own that it is unspeakably more dreadful and alarming to think of being lost and miserable FOREVER, and view himself in the utmost danger of it, than to see himself in danger of only a temporary punishment. The awakened sinner, in fearful expectation of destruction as the consequence of the way he has taken, will express the feelings of his mind in the following language: "O, if the destruction which is like to be my portion were not *endless*, it would be tolerable and light compared with being miserable *forever!* The thought of this drinks up my spirit, and draws over my soul a horrid gloom and sinking despair, and fills it with anguish and torture which nothing else could do. If I could be sure this punishment will ever come to an end, and I be forever happy after all, this would be better than ten thousand worlds to me, and turn all my sorrow and distress into peace and joy." And let such a sinner be persuaded that this is true, and his concern, that laid him under great restraints before, will subside; and his strong aversion to holiness, and powerful, pressing inclination to indulge his darling lusts and live in sin, will hold him fast in this course with a great degree of security and ease. And he is never like to be alarmed again, or persuaded to alter his

Therefore, if it were possible that this doctrine should be really believed and spread, would it not sap the foundation of civil government, introduce the greatest evils in human society by the prevalence of the unrestrained lusts of men, put an end to all mutual confidence of men in each other, and promote suicide and murders innumerable? According to this doctrine the greatest enemy of God in the world has the staff in his own hands, and whenever the indulgence of his lusts has rendered this life disagreeable, he may defy the punishing hand of his Maker, and push himself into perfect and endless happiness in a moment! This is observed, not as an argument, or from the least desire, that the civil power should be exerted to put a stop to this doctrine, but to demonstrate that tenet to be a gross delusion which is pregnant with such fatal evils to human society.

course, by all the terrors they can preach to him who tell him he is no danger of endless misery, but, let him live as he will, he must be eternally happy.*

If the sinner be told, and is made to believe, that though he live and die in his evil courses, he will be punished in the future state only till he is willing to repent; this will be no matter of terror to him, or have the least tendency to reform him, but the contrary, to an amazing degree; for he is disposed to think himself not very guilty and ill deserving, and that his lusts and vicious courses are in a great degree innocent and harmless, and, therefore, that his punishment will not be very great. Besides, he has so good an opinion of himself, that he has not the least doubt but he shall be willing to repent immediately, when the present objects of his lusts and pursuits shall be at an end, and he can have no more pleasure and happiness in the way of sin; and, consequently, it is impossible to make him fear any length of punishment on this plan, or even any at all, because he is confident he shall escape it all by repentance and submission to God. Therefore, the threatening of such a punishment will have no more influence on the sinner, to awaken and reform him, than none at all, while he is assured he shall have everlasting happiness, and shall suffer no longer than he shall continue obstinate and impenitent.

How many millions of sinners have there been who have quieted their fears, and encouraged themselves to go on in vicious courses, by presuming that in their last moments they would repent and cry for mercy, if they did not do it before; and that they should then find favor with God, when they could enjoy the pleasures of sin no longer? And if this presumption has given such encouragement to continue in sin, when they had no security that they should have any opportunity to repent, or assurance that God would then regard them if in their last moments they should cry to him for mercy, how much more encouragement to licentiousness is given to sinners by assuring them from the Word of God that they shall be eternally happy, be they as vicious as they will in this life, and that they shall not suffer a minute longer than

* It has been said, that a long future punishment, including very great and terrible sufferings, even till the sinner is brought to repentance, is sufficient effectually to restrain men from their wicked courses, yea, more effectually than endless punishment, because the latter is incredible, and will not, therefore, affect the mind. But is not this said in opposition to the highest reason and all experience? Whether endless punishment does "exceed all belief," let him judge who has perused the preceding inquiry. And it is easy to see that the fear of a finite punishment must have unspeakably less influence on the sinner than of an endless one, if it will have any at all in this case.

they continue impenitent, and shall have as good and better opportunity to repent and cry for mercy in the other world than they have here, as they will not have the same tempting objects and allurements to sin, nor can have any pleasure or advantage by it, and it can never be too late to repent?

This being the case, it is no wonder it is confirmed by fact and experience. Where is the person who has been awakened and reformed from a course of sin by being told that if he did not repent and reform in this life, though he must after all be eternally happy, yet he should be punished in the other world till he was willing to repent and be happy? It is presumed no such person is to be found, nor can the argument be given up till some instances to the contrary are produced; especially, since there are so many instances on the other side to confirm it. Who are the persons that are most pleased with the doctrine of universal salvation, and forwardest to embrace it? The most sober, virtuous, benevolent people, or they who are at the greatest distance from all this? And what improvement is evidently made of it by multitudes? Is it not to flatter and confirm them in licentiousness? Is it not peculiarly suited to this corrupt age? And does it not promise to promote, as far as it shall spread, a torrent of libertinism in the practice of all manner of vice and wickedness? Every serious, attentive person will easily decide these questions.

How can that doctrine be agreeable to the gospel represented by Christ and the inspired writers, as not suited to please wicked men, but to excite their displeasure and hatred, which is so very agreeable to wicked men and infidels now; so that they will rather renounce the Bible and turn Deists, than give it up? Yea, all open enemies to the sacred oracles, if they believe a future state, are friends to the doctrine of universal happiness.

Can that doctrine be agreeable to Christ, or displeasing to the devil, which is so pleasing to wicked men in this world, and has such manifest influence to flatter and confirm them in their evil courses?

III. In the light of eternal punishment we have a most affecting sight of the awfully dangerous and extremely miserable and wretched state of all those who are in their impenitence, going the broad way that leads to this destruction; and hence learn what tender concern and bowels of compassion ought to be exercised towards them, and the reasonableness of being ready and engaged to take all possible pains, and use all proper means, that they may be plucked as brands from everlasting burnings.

There are many instances of great temporary calamity and

wretchedness in this world, which render persons objects of most sensible compassion. Such instances of misery often moved the compassion of our benevolent Savior when he was on the earth, and he wrought many miracles for their relief. But this misery is nothing to that now in view. All the evil that men ever did, or can suffer, in this world, bears no proportion to the evil case of one sinner who is cast into hell, from whence he cannot be delivered so long as God shall exist. This evil, indeed, is not yet actually come upon them, but they are in the utmost danger of it, and will soon have it fixed upon them forever, unless, by some means, they can be recovered from their present course. This case, then, above all others, calls for the compassion of the benevolent, and is most suited to raise it to the greatest height, and animate to the most earnest and unwearied endeavors to relieve and save them. The compassion of St. Paul was excited, by seeing men in this case, which caused "great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart," and engaged him to "warn every one night and day with tears," and made him willing to do and suffer any thing, "if by any means he might save some," and led him even to wish himself accursed from Christ, if this might effect the salvation of his brethren the Jews.

It is owing to unbelief, and great stupidity and senselessness respecting eternal punishment, that they who are exposed to it, so that nothing but the tender thread of life, liable to break every minute, holds them up from this destruction, can make themselves easy and feel so secure, and do not lament and weep, and turn their laughter into mourning, and their joy into heaviness, and fall into the greatest distress and horror: and what but an awful degree of this same stupidity can be the reason that the benevolent friends of mankind are not more affected with the misery of the wicked, and so little moved with compassion while they are daily surrounded by such infinitely miserable objects, and are so negligent of means that might be used for their relief?

Who can fully express the unreasonableness and folly of exercising great concern and anxiety about temporal calamities, and taking much pains to prevent their coming on near relations and friends, or deliver them from those which are upon them, while there is not the least concern nor any pains taken to deliver them from infinitely greater evil, even eternal destruction?

Is there not a great degree of practical denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment among professing Christians, while they feel and express no more tender concern and compassion for sinners who are in such imminent danger of this punishment,

if it be a reality, and use no more means to reclaim and save them? How ought they to put on bowels of mercies and kindness towards them, and treat them with the greatest love, tenderness and compassion, patience and long-suffering, while they are taking the most likely methods for their help? If Christians were thoroughly attentive to this, and did express their compassion for sinners in all proper ways, it would remove one argument many think they have that there is no such punishment, viz., that Christians themselves do not appear really to believe it, while they profess to do it; and it would tend to make eternal misery more of a reality to them, and to gain their attention and affect their hearts.

How unbecoming the profession of Christians is it to be unmoved and inactive in this case, especially to converse and conduct so as tends to prevent the salvation of others, and destroy them forever! Instead of being with Christ, and gathering with him, they are against him, and doing the work of the great destroyer of souls; and how guilty must the ministers of the gospel and parents be, what an unbecoming and monstrously cruel part do they act, when, instead of faithfulness and benevolence to the souls immediately under their care, they speak and conduct in a manner which tends to their eternal ruin, and so become their destroyers! These not only imitate the destroyer, but their sin in destroying souls forever is, in many respects, much more aggravated than his.

IV. This subject will be closed with the following address: —

First. To those who have been by some means led into a disbelief of the doctrine of endless punishment, and those who are in doubt about it, and do not yet determine whether there will be any such punishment or not.

If any of either of these have read the foregoing sheets, and shall be disposed still to read on, they are desired seriously to consider whether the doctrine of eternal punishment is not as clearly revealed and as well supported by Scripture and reason as any truth whatsoever; and what dangerous presumption it is to reject it, until they can find a full and satisfactory answer to the Scriptures and arguments which have been adduced in favor of it; and such must be warned of the danger of rejecting this doctrine through prejudice, and a fond inclination and desire that the contrary doctrine should be true. In this view, they are entreated to consider the following things: —

1. The Scriptures present the truth there revealed as disagreeable to wicked men; and that, for this reason, they are disposed to dislike and reject it. Our Savior says, "Every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,

lest his deeds should be reproved." And such are represented as "saying to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us *smooth things*, prophesy deceits, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." The divine character is disagreeable to them; therefore, when the prophets prophesied falsely, the degenerate people loved to have it is so, and greedily embraced the delusion.

You who are conscious you are yet in your sins — that your hearts and practice are not conformable to the dictates of reason and Word of God — ought not to conclude any doctrine to be wrong because it is not agreeable to your way of thinking, and is displeasing to your inclinations and hearts. You must be cautioned and warned of your danger in the case before us. What if you should, through the sinful prejudice and evil bias of your minds, form your hopes of eternal happiness upon the fond conceit that none will be miserable forever, and, when it shall be too late, find yourselves mistaken, and be plunged into that very endless misery which you was persuaded had no existence, and perhaps even ridiculed those who asserted it! Take heed, lest the awful disappointment, this infinite evil, come upon you!

2. The first lie that was told in this world was in the words of Satan, the father of lies, to our mother Eve: "*Ye shall not surely die*," in order to induce her to rebel against God, and ruin herself. And he has been propagating this lie and deception among mankind ever since, by which men have flattered themselves that they should have peace, though they walked after the evil inclinations of their own hearts, and it has proved the ruin of multitudes. And have you not reason to fear, yea, may you not be certain — when it is asserted that no man shall perish forever for any sin he can commit in this life, though he obstinately persist in it till death, but, notwithstanding all possible rebellion, shall be happy forever — this is the same lie, revived and propagated by Satan and those unhappy persons who are taken in his snare? It certainly looks just like it. And are you willing to be taken in such a snare and perish forever?

3. The sacred oracles represent wicked men as inclined to flatter themselves that evil will not come upon them, when they are upon the brink of destruction. "The wicked hath said in his heart, I shall not be removed; for I shall never be in adversity." (Ps. x. 6.) "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us." (Isa. xxviii. 5.) "Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, and it

come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst." (Deut. xxix. 18, 19.) "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) This is the natural attendant of sin, thus to blind and delude the sinner, and lead him to flatter himself that he shall escape the evil which is hastening upon him. And if you begin to lose the fears of future punishment which perhaps you once had, and to think and grow confident that you shall have peace and eternal life, though you walk after the imagination of your own heart, and indulge every lust, have you not reason to think you are an instance of this very self-flattery and delusion described in the Scriptures now cited? If this be not the very thing, what can it be? Awake and tremble, O sinner, for, verily, thou art the man!

4. The character of false prophets, in the Scripture, is, that they flatter men in their sins, and prophesy smooth things, promising peace and safety to men, when destruction is coming upon them. And, on the contrary, the true prophets declared there was no peace to the wicked, and denounced evil and certain destruction which was coming upon them unless they repented. And this recommended the former to the multitude, who caressed and spoke well of them; and at the same time rendered the latter disagreeable, and brought upon them hatred and ill treatment.

This observation might be illustrated by referring to a great number of particular passages of Scripture. The attentive reader of the Bible must be sensible of this. Only the following will be recited now: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophecy unto you; they make you vain. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you." (Jer. xxiii. 16, 17.) Of false prophets it is said, "They have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace." (Eze. xiii. 10.) "With lies ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way, by promising him *life*." (Verse 22.)

Let those who are now addressed seriously consider whether they who promise eternal happiness to you, whatever be your character in this world, so that you cannot miss of it by any course of sin whatever, do not take upon them the very character which the Bible gives of false prophets; and whether

they who, on the contrary, hold forth endless destruction as the certain portion of the impenitent sinner, and those other doctrines which are connected with this, and are so disagreeable to wicked men in general, do not appear in the character of true prophets and teachers; and whether, by embracing the former, and rejecting and hating the latter, you will not act just as those deluded, wicked men did who were pleased with the prophets who preached peace to them, and hated and persecuted those of the contrary character.

Be entreated to think of this, as you value your own souls, and would not be flattered to your eternal ruin. Think of it with an unprejudiced, honest mind, until you are able to give a rational, satisfactory answer; and is it possible it should be in the negative?

5. When all the evidence from Scripture, supported by reason, which has been produced, together with the preceding observations, are honestly considered and weighed, is it possible that any one should be able to stand forth and say, "I am absolutely certain that all mankind will be eternally happy, and that he stands on a safe and sure foundation who has no other ground but this to build his assurance of everlasting life upon"? If you cannot do this, as you certainly cannot, unless your delusion be remarkably strong, but must own you are far from being absolutely certain that all shall be happy, then why will you adhere to this, and trust in such an uncertainty for salvation, however probable you may think the doctrine to be, and neglect the only way in which you may be absolutely certain, and build on the most sure ground?

God hath laid in Zion a sure foundation, a tried, precious, corner stone, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed of his hope, shall never be destroyed. Here is the most perfect security, established by innumerable express promises made by him who cannot lie. He who believeth on Christ with that faith which implies love and obedience to him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. How unreasonably do you act, of what folly and madness are you guilty, if you neglect and refuse this great and sure salvation which is offered to you! and you may be absolutely sure you shall have everlasting life, if you will accept of it; and trust to that which, at most, is no more than probable, and may fail you after all. This is neglecting a certainty, for the sake of an uncertainty at best, in an affair of the highest moment. Such conduct would be thought madness in any temporal, worldly matter: why then will you be guilty of it when your whole, your eternal interest is depending? Indeed, there is no probability that such folly and infatuation will end well; but a

certainty, that if you take this course, and neglect Christ and the great salvation now, you cannot escape everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

Secondly. This address turns to those who profess to believe the doctrine of endless punishment, and know they are not Christians, who own themselves to be constantly exposed to everlasting destruction, and that this must be their portion, if they should die while in their present state; and yet are in a great measure secure and easy, while they are neglecting the great salvation, and many of them go on in open and unrestrained wickedness.

Dear, infatuated souls, how can you be insensible, if you will think seriously a minute, that you are in a most dangerous, wretched case, which calls for the pity of all the benevolent, and their earnest prayers and friendly endeavors for your relief? And though all of this kind has hitherto had no apparent success, yet the attempt must be repeated, and you are to be reproved, rebuked, and exhorted, with all tenderness, long-suffering, and doctrine, or instruction, if, peradventure, God will give you repentance, and you may recover yourselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. Think not them your enemies who tell you the truth, whatever disagreeable and painful feelings it may give you.

Be entreated, as you love your own souls, not to hearken to the insinuations of those who would persuade you there is no such dreadful evil as endless punishment to fear. There are such, and many are greedily swallowing the bait, and caught fast in the fatal snare, from which it is much to be feared they will never be recovered. You are not out of danger. Take heed to yourselves, lest you should be induced to believe this fatal lie by those who, with all their cunning craftiness, lie in wait to deceive. For, while they promise you peace, liberty, and eternal life, they themselves must perish forever in their own delusion, unless they repent and believe on Christ before they leave this world.

Attend to the evidence there is, from the Holy Scriptures, of the certainty of endless punishment, and think of it till your minds are established in the truth, and it becomes a reality to you. Be persuaded to meditate much upon the dreadfulness of this punishment. You may be sure you cannot imagine it to be greater than it will be, or conceive of the thousandth part of the dreadfulness of it. Think often, yea, constantly, how dreadful it will be to find yourselves lost forever, plunged into perfect, inexpressible misery, in absolute despair of deliv-

erance, or the least mitigation of punishment, to all eternity! never, never to have another agreeable thought or sensation, in the midst of the most disagreeable, horrid company, suffering the most keen distress and torture, which will be poured in upon you from every quarter, while you know you have not a friend in the universe to help or pity you; under the awful and most sensible frowns and curse of the infinitely terrible Jehovah, who will live forever and ever to punish you; your thoughts swiftly and irresistibly running forward and fixing on eternal, endless duration; and the more you dwell on this, the higher will your misery and anguish arise; at the same time, with the keenest remorse reflecting that you have brought yourselves to this infinitely dreadful end by your own amazing folly, by constantly, through your whole life, rejecting the offers of pardon and salvation kindly made to you, and urged upon you by the infinitely benevolent Savior. Think of all this, and much more, which, by seriously attending to the representation given in Scripture of future punishment, will naturally be suggested to your mind.

Do not forget a moment in what an infinitely dangerous situation you are; on the brink of the bottomless pit, where are everlasting burnings, having nothing to secure you from sinking down to hell, being held out of it only by the hand of him whose goodness you are abusing, and whom you are constantly provoking, in a manner dreadful to think of, though it cannot be fully conceived, to let you sink forever; and by this be warned to fly from the wrath to come.

And remember, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty, glorious Redeemer, now invites you to look unto him, that you may be saved from this infinitely dreadful, everlasting destruction, and you are called and commanded to repent and come unto him, that you may have eternal life; and it must, therefore, be altogether your own inexcusable fault, if you perish by refusing to obey his call; and your rejecting him, and thus going to hell, will necessarily render your punishment inexpressibly greater and more dreadful than it would be if there had been no Savior, and you never had such an offer. Why, then, will you not now believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved?

How shocking is the sight of all openly vicious persons! The unrighteous and oppressor — the evil speaker and contentious — the adulterer, fornicator, and all lewd, obscene persons — the drunkard, and all liars, — these shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but must have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, unless they repent.

And what will become of all those who refuse to pay any regard to God, to religion, and divine institutions; who wholly neglect the Bible, disregard the Sabbath, and all the ordinances of Christ; who restrain prayer, and will not call upon God? The Lord will come in a day when they look not for him, and at an hour when they think not, and will cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with unbelievers, where shall be endless weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

There are multitudes among us, and the number is increasing, who not only take the sacred name of their Maker in vain, but trifle and sport with that which is above all things dreadful, eternal damnation. They will not only wish damnation to others, but damn their own souls and bodies, or call upon God to damn them, many hundreds of times in a day. It is not probable any of these will read this; but it is earnestly to be desired, that, by some means, the reality and amazing dreadfulness of damnation might so impress their minds as effectually to prevent their ever uttering another profane curse, and they be made sensible of their astonishing stupidity, impiety, and wickedness, in thus cursing themselves and others; by which they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and by every such curse add to their eternal misery, when their cursing will become a reality, and pour into their own bowels like water, and into their bones like oil, if their repentance do not prevent.

There are others, who, for the sake of some sensual, momentary gratification, or the vain amusements and follies of this life, are giving up their eternal happiness, and plunging themselves into endless destruction. O, that they would attend and hearken to the kind warning and advice given to them by Christ! "If thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off; or if thine eye offend thee, (i. e., cause thee to offend or fall,) pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, or with one eye, than having two hands, or two feet, or two eyes, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched — where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

How many worldly-minded persons are there, who, for the sake of the pursuit, or the possession and enjoyments of this world, are every day selling their souls, and giving them up to be tormented forever! Let such consider what they are doing, of what inexpressible folly and madness they are guilty, by realizing what it is to be lost, to go away into everlasting punishment; and let them attend to the awakening words of

Christ, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Others there are, who, having been restrained from the gross open vices which they see practised by many, and being insensible of the vile nature and ill desert of all sin, and ignorant of the wickedness of their own hearts, think they do not deserve to be punished forever, and, therefore, are confident they are in no danger of this dreadful evil; and others depend on their prayers and supposed good works, thinking them so deserving as to be sufficient to secure them from future punishment. All these would be sensible of their mistake and delusion, did they understand and believe what is said of Christ;—"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;"—or did they attend to the divine law, and let that come to their consciences and hearts, in its true meaning and strictness, cursing every one who continueth not in all things written and required therein; for by this their sins which are now hid from them would revive, and all their vain hopes forever die.

In sum, whatever be the different circumstances and conduct of men in this life, if they be not real Christians, they are in danger of eternal fire; and if they die in their present state and character, will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. For the Redeemer himself hath said, and it cannot be reversed, but will be verified in all, "He that believeth [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved; *but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" Amen.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

SIN,

THROUGH DIVINE INTERPOSITION,

AN ADVANTAGE TO THE UNIVERSE,

AND YET

THIS NO EXCUSE FOR SIN, OR ENCOURAGEMENT TO IT,

ILLUSTRATED AND PROVED;

AND

GOD'S WISDOM AND HOLINESS IN THE PERMISSION OF SIN, AND THAT HIS WILL HEREIN IS THE SAME WITH HIS REVEALED WILL, SHOWN AND CONFIRMED,

IN

THREE SERMONS,

FROM ROMANS iii. 5–8.

"With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and deceiver are his."—Job xii. 16.

"But God meant it unto good."—Gen. l. 20.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."—Rom. vi. 1, 2.

PREFACE.

I QUITE agree with those who think ministers ought not to bring into the pulpit dry speculations, or dark, abstruse, disputed points, which have no tendency to make the heart better and influence the practice, but shall be far from agreeing with any who may think the subject of the following sermons to be such. If God has given us sufficient evidence to determine that all the sin and misery in the universe is for the general good of the whole, and shall answer some good end that shall much more than counterbalance the evil, then, doubtless, it is of importance that all should attend to the evidence, and believe this truth.

It is, I conceive, evident beyond contradiction, that this truth must be believed in order to a true and cheerful submission to God's will as it is manifested in what he does and what he permits. For he who cheerfully submits to God's will, submits to it as *wise* and *good*, either seeing it to be so in the instance his submission respects, or believing it implicitly; for it is not our duty, or indeed possible, for us to be reconciled or submit to absolute evil, or evil as such. But if the sin and misery which take place in the world are not for the general good of the universe, then they are absolutely evil, or evil in every view and sense; and so God's will to permit sin and misery is not wise and good, and, therefore, cannot be submitted to.

That "there is no *absolute* evil in the universe"* is a maxim on which is grounded all implicit submission to God's will, in his providential directing and disposing all events, which we are required to be ready on all occasions to exercise. So far, therefore, as this truth is doubted, or out of view, so far there can be no sincere, cheerful submission. Is it not then of great importance that this truth should be maintained and held up to view? and that, especially, at a time when it seems to be much out of sight to most, and begins to be even called in question by many?

The more a Christian's heart is filled with true benevolence, the more ardently he wishes and seeks the good of the universe; or, which is the same thing, the more conformed to God he is in true holiness, the more averse he is to absolute evil, and the further from a reconciliation to it; and nothing would tend more to cross and distress him than that there should be any such thing in the universe. And if he should suppose that God had permitted that to take place which was, on the whole, a disadvantage to the universe, he must divest himself of his benevolence, before he could be reconciled or submit to it. And it must, therefore, be peculiarly satisfying and pleasing to find the contrary revealed as a certain truth in the Scripture. If Christians, therefore, tamely give up this truth, where will they go for support and comfort in dark and evil times?

As, therefore, this truth is of such use and importance to Christians, it was needful that the objections made against it should be answered — especially that most common one found in the text. The commonness of this objection, and the plausibleness with which it appears to many who do not attend closely to this matter, was the inducement so particularly to consider it, and show its groundlessness and absurdity, which is done in the second sermon.

* "If the Author and Governor of all things be infinitely perfect, then whatever is, is right, of all possible systems he hath chosen the best, and, consequently, there is no *absolute* evil in the universe. This being the case, all the seeming imperfections or evils in it are such only in a partial view; and with respect to the whole system, they are goods."—*Turnbull's Christian Philosophy.*

If we cannot reconcile God's permitting sin with his goodness, holiness, and his revealed will, then the permission of sin is a dark and unaccountable affair to us indeed, and we cannot be reconciled to it, or justify God herein. It becomes us to justify and approve of all God's ways to men, — to see and acknowledge his righteousness in all he does; yea, it becomes us to be well pleased with all God's ways, so far as they are made known to us, for in this way alone shall we be able truly to rejoice that the LORD reigns, and hath done whatsoever pleased him.

They who cannot reconcile God's permission of sin to his wisdom, holiness, and revealed will, can really understand and be reconciled to few or none of God's ways to men; for almost all God's conduct towards men is built upon this, or some way related to it, as all must be sensible on the least reflection.

If, therefore, this attempt, imperfect as it is, shall afford any light and help to any in these important points, the labor and expense will be richly compensated.

SHEFFIELD, *June* 19, 1759.

THREE SERMONS.

SERMON I.

Sin the Occasion of great Good.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)
God forbid! For then how shall God judge the world?
For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?
And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.
ROMANS iii. 5–8.

IN these words I shall take notice of two things, which are to my present purpose, viz.: —

FIRST. An objection against the reasonableness and justice of God's charging that on men as a crime, and punishing them for that which answers some very good end, and is, in the event, greatly to his glory. This we have in the 5th verse. "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" When the apostle says, *I speak as a man*, he means, that in these words he states an objection that blind, sinful men were ready to make.* And this objection is more particularly stated in the seventh verse. "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" The question is, how God can justly find fault with and punish that unrighteousness and wickedness of men which is the occasion of the exercise and manifestation of his righteousness, truth and holiness, by which there is made a bright display of his glory. How can that conduct of men, which answers such good purposes, be hated, condemned, and punished by God? If sin is so much for

* "*I speak as a man*, i. e., I object this as the language of carnal hearts, it is suggested *like a man*, a vain, foolish, proud creature." — *Henry on the place.*
"Here I represent the reasoning of an unbelieving Jew." — *Dr. Taylor's Paraphrase in loc.*

God's glory, then surely sin is, on the whole, a *good*, and consequently the more sin there is the better. Why, then, does God forbid it? Why is he angry with the sinner? And where is the justice of punishing him for it? Does not this give full license, yea, the greatest imaginable encouragement, to sin? If such great good comes of sin, then let us do evil that good may come.*

Secondly. The objection rejected as groundless, absurd, and impious. (Verse 6.) God forbid! For then how shall God judge the world? As if the apostle had said, "Such a suggestion is to be rejected with abhorrence, as absurd and blasphemous as it is directly against God, the righteous Judge of the world."

Some suppose that the whole of the eighth verse is an answer to the foregoing objection, which the apostle gives in these words, by showing where the objection would lead them, if granted to be just, viz., that we ought to commit sin, because God made it the occasion of good, and would some way turn it all to his glory.† But I rather think, with Mr. Locke and others,‡ that these words, "and not rather — let us do evil that good may come," are a continuation of the objection; and that the words, "as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say," which are a parenthesis, together with the last words, "whose damnation is just," contain the apostle's answer. He rejects it as an unjust and groundless consequence from the premises, which was the doctrine of the apostle, viz., that sin was the occasion of God's glory, and so of the greatest good; and condemns those who made this objection and practised upon it, by this short and severe sentence, *whose damnation is just.*

But be this as it will, whether the objection is continued in the eighth verse, or is the whole of it, the apostle's answer, the passage taken together holds forth the following truth, which I design to make the subject of my discourse from these words, viz.: —

* "Carnal hearts might from hence take occasion to encourage themselves in sin. He [the apostle] had said, that the universal guilt and corruption of mankind gave occasion to the manifestation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ. Now it may be suggested, if all our sin be so far from overthrowing God's honor that it doth commend it, and his ends are secured so that there is no harm done, is it not unjust for God to punish our sin and unbelief so severely?" — *Mr. Henry in loc.*

† Dr. Taylor paraphrases the words thus: "And why do you not draw this into a general rule and maxim, that in all cases we ought to do wickedly, because God can one way or other turn it to his own glory? An impious sentiment, which some charge upon me, etc." — *See Dr. Taylor's Paraphrase on Romans;* also *Dr. Doddridge* on this verse.

‡ *Locke, Pool's Synopsis,* and *Henry in loc.*

THOUGH SIN IS THE OCCASION OF GREAT GOOD, YET THIS AFFORDS NO EXCUSE FOR SIN, OR THE LEAST ENCOURAGEMENT TO IT.*

In this doctrine two propositions are contained, one implied and the other expressed, viz., —

I. Sin may be, and actually is, the occasion of great good.

II. This affords no excuse for sin, or encouragement to it.

I shall endeavor to prove and illustrate these propositions in their order.

I. Sin may be, and actually is, the occasion of great good.

This is supposed in the passage of Scripture on which the doctrine is grounded. The apostle does not deny, but implicitly grants, that men's unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God; that the truth of God does by men's lies and wickedness abound to his glory, and so that evil or sin is the occasion of good.

But we are not left to learn this truth from this passage only. The Holy Bible abundantly reveals to us, not only that sin may be the occasion of good, but that it actually is so, by becoming the means of promoting the good of man in many instances, and advancing the declarative glory of God.

The Bible is full of instances of this, a few of which I will mention.

We have an instance in the sin of Joseph's brethren, in selling him into Egypt. It is expressly said (Gen. l. 20) God meant it unto good; i. e., God intended good by their wickedness. And God's end was abundantly answered. By this, and what Joseph suffered in a state of bondage in consequence of it, he was fitted for that honorable and useful station God designed him for. This was the means of providing for God's church and people, and saving them alive, as well as preserving the kingdom of Egypt in the time of famine. This sin of Joseph's brethren, therefore, was one means by which God fulfilled his covenant promises to his people, and so was the occasion of his truth's abounding to his glory. And this was the means of God's name becoming great through the land of Egypt, and was an introduction to all the mighty works God did there, and in the wilderness, in the deliverance

* "I think this implies that there are certain rules which God has laid down for us, disobedience to which, in any imaginable circumstances, is universally a moral evil, even though the quantity of good arising from thence to our fellow-creatures should be greater than that arising from observing those rules. For if this be not allowed, there can be no shadow of force in the apostle's conclusion." — *Doddridge in loc.*

of Israel from Egypt, and their return to the land of Canaan; and so was one necessary and important step towards all that glory God obtained hereby, and all that good which his church received. Thus this evil was the means of good, and the sin of Joseph's brethren in selling him into bondage had a train of good consequences attending it, and was the occasion of more good than I have time now particularly to mention, yea, more than can be easily reckoned up, or even conceived of.

We have another instance in the wickedness of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Pharaoh was an instance of remarkable wickedness. He cruelly oppressed the children of Israel, he bid open defiance to JEHOVAH, and repeatedly refused to obey him and regard his prophets and messengers, though they wrought many miracles and wonders before his eyes, to convince him that they were sent by the omnipotent Governor of the world. Yea, though when in sore distress by the hand of God, that was heavy upon him, he repeatedly confessed his sin and promised reformation, if God would deliver him, yet he as often hardened his heart, and broke all his promises. And after the Israelites were gone out of Egypt, with a mighty hand, not only by his leave, but by his urgent desire, he soon hardens his heart, and pursues them, resolved to take revenge. What an instance of cruelty, pride, obstinacy, daring presumption and impiety was Pharaoh! Yet God made all his wickedness the occasion of good — good to his people, and the glory of his great name. For this we have God's own express declaration: "And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Ex. ix. 16.) This was the end God had in raising up Pharaoh, in preserving him, and suffering him to go on and grow thus great in wickedness, that, by destroying him at last, and delivering his people from his oppressive hand, he might bestow the good on his church he had in store for them, and fulfil his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that in such a way as to get to himself a great name through all the earth. And this end was answered; God triumphed gloriously in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, and in the salvation of his people from their hand.

Again, the sin of the Jews and Gentiles in putting our Lord Jesus Christ to death was the occasion of great good. The death of Christ, considered in all its consequences, was one of the most glorious events that ever happened; most necessary for the good of men, and most for the glory of God. Now, the death of Christ, so full of good to man, and so much to the glory of God, was brought about by the wickedness of

man, yea, one of the greatest instances of wickedness that ever was; and not only so, but it could be brought about no other way. If the Son of God must die, he must be put to death by wicked men. Surely, no Christian who hopes for salvation by the death of Christ, which was effected by the wickedness of man, can doubt but that greatest sin has been the occasion of the greatest good.

The last instance of this kind which I shall mention is the unbelief and obstinacy of the Jews as a people and nation, when the gospel was preached to them after the ascension of Christ. This was the occasion of the calling of the Gentiles, of their having the unsearchable riches of Christ preached to them; and so being ingrafted into the stock from which the Jews were broken off by unbelief. St. Paul considers the matter in this light, in the nineteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He says, "Through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles;" that "the fall of them was the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them was the riches of the Gentiles." (Verses 11, 12.) He speaks of the Gentiles as "having obtained mercy through their unbelief." (Verse 30.) And, in this view of the case, cries out, in the thirty-third verse, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Thus the sin and unbelief of the Jews was the occasion of mercy and salvation to the Gentiles. We Gentiles may now consider ourselves as reaping the benefit of the unbelief and fall of the Jews, and this day are in possession of the good that is come to us by that means.

Thus we have considered some instances in which great good has been brought about by the evil of sin, according to the express declaration of the Holy Scripture. I might turn you to many other instances of this kind, which I pass, as these I have mentioned set this matter, I think, in a plain and incontestable light.

And, since God has in some instances, yea, in so many, overruled the sin of man, to bring about some great good, who can say that he does not so with regard to every sin that men commit? Yea, have we not reason to think, and even be sure, that this is actually the case? May we not conclude, may we not be confident, that all the sin which takes place among men, from the fall of the first created pair to the end of the world, shall, some way or other, be overruled by God to answer some good end? If God does it in one instance, why may he not, yea, why will he not, in every instance? He who is infinite in wisdom and power can overrule all sin for good, as well and as easy as any one sin. And our not

being able to see how he does it, or how it can be done, is no objection at all. Surely, we do not think to limit infinite wisdom and power by our own scanty conceptions. The instances of this recorded in Scripture, which we have been considering, are a specimen and pledge of what God can do, and doubtless of what he actually does with respect to sin in general, yea, every instance of it that takes place. These instances on record are a proof that sin is not, in its own nature, such a thing as that it cannot be improved by infinite wisdom to bring about great good. And if it is not so in its own nature, nothing can make it so, we have reason to think.

And if God is wise and powerful enough, and so *can* make sin in general, yea, every instance of it, answer some good end, may we not suppose that he actually does it? If God does not want wisdom and power to do it, we cannot think he will neglect it, or suffer sin to fail of answering a good end, through want of care and attention to this matter. No, surely; it is not a matter of indifference with God whether sin answers a good end, or a bad one, or none at all. To suppose this would be to suppose the infinitely holy God perfectly indifferent about good and evil, — yea, perfectly indifferent about the most interesting and important affair in the universe, — which would be the most unworthy thought of God, as well as the greatest absurdity.

But as it is of importance that we should all form our opinion right in this matter, let us again turn to the Bible, and see what further light we can get there on this point. And here we may observe the following things: —

1. The Bible leads us to look upon the gospel, or the way of salvation by Christ, as a method God has taken to bring good out of the evil of sin in general. The gospel is founded in the sinfulness of man, and takes all its glory from it; and sin is the occasion of all the good that comes to man, and all the glory that comes to God by it. The great work of the Savior of the world is *to bring good out of evil;* and I think the Scripture leads us to consider the benefits of the gospel as a greater good than would have been had there been no sin. The Scriptures do not represent the work of redemption as what God has wrought to mend and patch up, as well as he could, a world that is spoiled and ruined by sin, as if there would have been more good in the world, upon the whole, if there had been no sin, and so no redemption by Christ. No; the work of redemption is represented in Scripture as contrived and laid out before the world was made, and as the most glorious of all God's works — far more glorious than the work of creation.

Jesus Christ is said to be ordained to the work of redemption *before the foundation of the world.* (1 Pet. i. 20.) And the glorious way of salvation, which is called the *wisdom of God*, is said to be *ordained before the world.* (1 Cor. ii. 7.) *Christ's* church and people are said to be *chosen in him before the foundation of the world.* (Eph. i. 3, 4.) The great favor that comes to believers by the gospel is said to be given to them *before the world began.* (1 Tim. i. 9.) Thus the Scripture leads us to consider the work of redemption as *originally designed* by God, before he made the world, as his greatest and most glorious work, in a view to which he made all things at first. Therefore, *all things* are said to be made *for* Christ. "For by him [i. e., Christ] were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible: all things were created by him, and *for him.*" (Col. i. 16.)

The new creation — i. e., the work of redemption — is said to be far more glorious than the first creation. "For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isa. lxv. 17.) Now the sin of man is the occasion of these new heavens and new earth; for the glory of Christ and his works could not have been, had not sin took place. Thus sin in general is the occasion of all that good which is comprised in the work of redemption, which, according to Scripture, so much exceeds all the good which was in the first creation. The world, considered as fallen, or sinful, and redeemed by Christ, is better and far more glorious than it was considered as without sin, according to Scripture. Thus we are taught that God's greatest and most glorious work is to bring good out of evil — to make sin in general, which is the greatest evil, the means of the greatest good. I proceed to observe, —

2. The Scripture not only teaches us that good is brought out of sin in general, by the work of redemption, but also that God makes the sin and final obstinacy of those that perish eternally the occasion of great good; — that God designs good by this evil, and brings good out of it. This we are particularly taught in Romans ix. 22. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" Here we are taught that God's end in bearing with sinners, and suffering them to go on in sin to destruction, is the manifestation of his power and wrath, — i. e., his own glory, — and that he makes their sin and ruin the occasion and means of it, and so brings good out of this evil, even their sinfulness and ruin. And, doubtless, the good obtained is greater than the evil by which it is brought about; for we

cannot reconcile it to the wisdom of God that he should suffer a greater evil for the sake of a less good. If God suffers sinners to go on to destruction, that he might hereby show his wrath, and make his power known, then it is not only certain that God makes the sin and ruin of those that perish the occasion and means of his own glory, but it is also certain that he counts his glory so great a good as to overbalance all that evil which he suffers to take place as a means of that good; so that, upon the whole, there is more good than if there had been no evil. I say we are *sure* of this; for to suppose the contrary is to impeach God's wisdom. For to suffer a greater evil for the sake of a less good is as if one should part with a thousand pounds for the sake of ten, or as the means of procuring one penny; or, as if he should endure a million degrees of pain for the sake of one degree of pleasure, which, upon the whole, is worse than nothing at all, and is really preferring evil to no evil, or a greater evil to a less; which is the same with choosing evil for evil's sake, and cannot be supposed of the wise and holy God, without blasphemy.

Indeed, the instance of Pharaoh, which we have before considered, is a specimen of all obstinate, impenitent sinners. As God raised him up, — i. e., suffered him to go on to such a degree of wickedness, till he was ripe for destruction, — that in him he might show his power, and cause his name to be declared throughout all the earth, so he suffers all sinners that finally perish to go on till they are fitted for destruction, that he may glorify himself in them; and it is from the instance of Pharaoh, and what God says of him, which St. Paul mentions in the seventeenth verse, that he is led to say what he does of finally impenitent sinners in general in the text under consideration.

He who can understand God's dealings with Pharaoh, and is reconciled to his suffering him to go on to so great a degree of wickedness that he might glorify himself in him, and can see God's righteousness and wisdom in bringing this good out of Pharaoh's wickedness, *he* will easily see how God makes the sin of all that are finally impenitent a means of his own glory, and suffers them to go on to destruction that he may answer this end.

If any should say, "Though God glorified himself by the great wickedness and obstinacy of Pharaoh, and does so by the sin and destruction of all that perish, yet God would be more glorified, and he would obtain a higher and better end, if neither Pharaoh nor any sinner went on in wickedness to final impenitence and destruction;" I say, if any should say so, I think they would contradict the Scripture texts we are

considering, or at least deny God's wisdom in his conduct in these instances. God says he suffered Pharaoh to go on to the length he did in sin, until he was ripe for ruin, that he might glorify himself thereby. Now, if he would have had more glory, or as much, if Pharaoh had not gone on as he did, then God did not take the best method and use the best means to glorify himself by Pharaoh; and, therefore, did not act wisely in seeking to glorify himself by Pharaoh's obstinacy and ruin; for wisdom consists in choosing the best means to answer the best end. This may be applied to finally impenitent sinners in general.

3. The Scripture teaches us that God makes *all* the sins of men, from the beginning to the end of the world, to answer some good end. This we are particularly taught in the 76th Psalm, 10th verse. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

By the wrath of man we are to understand the wickedness of men in general, by which they violently oppose God and all that is good. It is here said, that all this wrath shall praise God, i. e., shall be to his honor and glory; so that that wrath, that wickedness of man which would not answer this end, God will effectually restrain, and not suffer to take place. So that by this Scripture we are assured that God is glorified by all the sin that is in the world; God makes it all the occasion of this good. And the reason why God lays the restraints on men that he does, and so prevents there being more sin than there is, is because more sin would not answer this end; for God will have nothing in his world but what he can bring good out of, and turn to his own glory.

Another text which I think is full to this purpose, is that noted one, "*And it shall bruise thy head*," (Gen. iii. 15,) i. e., the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; which is as much as to say, that Christ shall utterly and completely disappoint and defeat the devil in what he had done in introducing sin into the world. But this he would not do, if he did not turn the sin which the devil had been the means of bringing into the world into good, by making it the occasion of more, or at least as much good, as there would have been if there had been no sin. If there is one instance of sin which is not turned to good, the devil is not herein disappointed and defeated, but is gratified finally; his end is answered, and it is so far just as he would have it. So far he is not conquered by Christ, but he gains his point and is conqueror himself. If the devil has in any degree marred and spoiled the world, and made it upon the whole worse than it would have been if he had not introduced sin into it, notwithstanding what Christ

has done to defeat him, then he has so far gained his point, and succeeded in the thing he aimed at; and, therefore, so far he is not defeated, but conquers and reigns.

So that these words hold forth this truth in the strongest light, viz., that all the sin in the world is, by Christ, made the occasion of good; yea, that Christ will make sin the occasion of so much good, that the world shall be at least as good a world* as if sin had never been introduced; so that Satan shall not gain his end in one point in the least degree, but shall be wholly defeated.

This is the way in which Christ bruises the serpent's head, viz., by bringing good out of evil; and the more good he makes sin the occasion of, the more effectually is Satan defeated, the greater is Christ's conquest, and the more he triumphs over the devil. If Christ is able to make sin the occasion of so much good, as that God shall be more glorified and this be a much better world than if sin had never come into it, this will be the most deadly and dreadful bruise to Satan's head that can be brought upon it. This will be an overthrow that the devil dreads above all things. To see God greatly glorified, and the world made much better by sin, by which Satan sought to dishonor God and spoil his world; yea, to see sin made the means of making God more glorious, and this a better world than could have been if sin had not been introduced, so that sin becomes the occasion of something directly opposite to that which Satan aims at and seeks to accomplish, and which he above all things hates and desires to destroy; for Satan, I say, to see things turn out so, will be above all things crossing and destructive to him, and must be the most effectual, the greatest and most glorious conquest over him that can be. This is to bruise his head in the highest degree. There is nothing the devil dreads so much as this; and, therefore, to prevent things coming to this pass, he has been exerting all his powers, and making unwearied attempts, in all ages; and, therefore, we may be sure Christ will accomplish this, if he can. He will so bring things about that God shall be more glorified, and this shall be, upon the whole, a much better world than if the devil had never attempted to dethrone God and ruin man; and will make sin, by which the devil sought to spoil this world and rob God of his honor, the occasion and means of bringing this about. I say, we may be sure Christ will do this *if he can*, and that to a wonderful and even infinite degree; and surely no Christian can doubt of his power to do it. For

* By the *world*, is not meant this earth, or things in the present state only; but the *whole universe* through all its duration.

this end he came into the world, and became the seed of the woman; for this he hung and died on the cross, by which he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them. By this he will effectually and gloriously destroy the works of the devil, and put all his enemies under his feet.

Thus we see how the Scripture represents God as making sin the occasion of good, even so as hereby to bring about more good than would have been without it; and that every instance of sin answers some good end, by the wise, overruling hand of God. The matter seems to be abundantly plain according to Scripture.

But there may be some yet stumbled at this, it being strange and unaccountable to them that this should be, upon the whole, a better world than it would have been had not sin and misery entered into it; it being to them one of the greatest paradoxes, that *that* which in itself is the greatest evil should be productive of the greatest good, the occasion of so much glory to God and good to the world.

But such, if any there are, are desired to consider the following things: —

1. Our not being able to see how this is, or can be done, is no argument that God cannot do it. Surely, infinite power and wisdom can do this, though infinitely beyond us. Doubtless God knows how to do this, "who disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise; who taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and carrieth the counsel of the froward headlong." (Job v. 12, 13.) This is the peculiar glory of God's wisdom, that it is able to bring such good out of such evil.

2. Let such consider how shocking and dreadful the thought must be, to suppose that God has permitted that to come into the world which has in a measure spoiled it, so that he can by no means remove the evil, recover the damage, and make his world as good as it was before! How could God look on and see this, and be unconcerned, and possess his infinite felicity? Surely this must grieve him to the heart, in a literal sense, and make him heartily repent that he had made a world for Satan to destroy — to destroy so that he never could perfectly recover it!

Should some one of a nice and elegant taste build a stately palace, and furnish it with every thing pleasant and delightful, and when he had done, his enemy should come and deface it, and throw it into the utmost confusion and deformity, and place in the midst of it something exceeding ugly to the view, and most offensive and loathsome to the smell, and he should be unable to remove it, or so contrive to make it answer some

good end to himself as totally to disappoint his enemy, surely this must be very grievous to him. Instead of beauty and pleasure, he must endure the mortification of a most ugly sight, and nauseous, abominable smell, while he has no way to help himself. He would wish a thousand times he had never struck a stroke to that building, but wish in vain. Now, if we suppose God's world is, upon the whole, the worse for sin, do we not represent him to be in the case of such a one, or, rather, infinitely worse?

3. We would do well to consider whether if we do not allow that every instance of sin is the occasion of some great good to overbalance it, or whether by supposing that, on the whole, the world is worse for sin, we do not really set something up above God, to rule with him, and even over him, in some degree.

According to the Scripture representation of this matter, which we have been considering, God is supreme. He is in the heavens, and hath done whatsoever pleased him. He doth his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and *none can stay his hand.* He has all things in his hand, and orders all events in this world; and lets nothing come into it, or take place there, but what is to answer some good end, and serves to make the world better, more perfect, and excellent than it would have been without it.

But if sin has, by coming into the world, marred and spoiled it, so that it will eternally be a worse, or less perfect and excellent world than it would have been if sin had not entered it, then, surely, sin did not come in by God's permission, but it was thrust in by some one so powerful that God could not prevent it, and, therefore, so far was, and continues to be, above and superior to the Most High.

The devil designed to rob God of his honor, and spoil the world he had made, by introducing sin into it, and so to outdo God, and be above him in this instance; and, as it were, take it out of God's hands, and reign in it himself. And so far as God, upon the whole, loses any honor by what the devil has done, — so far as this world is, upon the whole, worse, — so far the devil has obtained his end, has outdone the Most High, and reigns and triumphs, and will do so to all eternity. Surely, none would knowingly represent God in such a dishonorable light, and ascribe such honor and power to the devil and wicked men, but would much rather say, *All* honor and power belong unto God, and rejoice that God is above men and devils in the thing wherein they deal most proudly; and herein discovers himself to be greater than all others that would desire to be gods.

Having thus endeavored to illustrate and confirm this proposition, I shall now make some reflections on what has been said, by way of inference.

1. This view of the matter helps us to a short, easy, and satisfactory way of accounting for God's suffering sin to come into the world, and permitting it to prevail and abound as it has done; and, indeed, it cannot be accounted for in any other way.

Some of the heathen, in order to account for sin's coming into the world, have supposed it to be governed by two opposite, independent principles or beings, a good one and an evil one; and that all sin and evil is from the evil being, which the good being cannot prevent, and so has no hand even in permitting sin.

And some who have the advantage of divine revelation give but a very little better account of the matter, while they suppose God could not prevent sin taking place among his creatures; that God made a number of intelligent creatures that he could not control and keep from sin, if he continued them in being and free agents, and treated them according to the nature and capacity of such. And so the world has been in a great measure spoiled and ruined by sin, introduced by the free agency of the creature, which could not be restrained and controlled by God. But how this can be reconciled with the Scripture, or the wisdom, supremacy, and infinite happiness of God, I think they have never yet shown.

But if God saw that sin's entering into the world would be the best means of answering the greatest and best ends — would be the occasion of the greatest good — a means of the world's becoming better, more excellent and glorious than otherwise it would be, then it is easy to see why he should determine to suffer it to take place, even though at the same time he knew how to prevent it, and could easily have done it. For the sake of the great good which God saw sin would be the occasion of by his disposal, he was quite willing to suffer it to take place among his creatures, and therefore permitted it.

Objection. Is not this to make God do evil that good may come, which St. Paul greatly condemns in the text?

Answer. By no means. Surely God does not do evil in permitting his creatures to sin, but, on the contrary, acts wisely and holily herein. The creature does the evil, and not God. The creature's aims and ends, in committing sin are wicked and vile; but God's aims and designs, in permitting the creature thus to act, are wise and holy. Therefore, God does not do evil that good may come, but all he does is good.

Objection. But does not this represent God as willing and choosing sin, and so taking pleasure in it? To suppose which, would be the highest blasphemy.

Answer. This does not represent God as taking pleasure in sin, and willing and choosing it for its own sake, in itself considered; but he is willing sin should take place, for the sake of something else, viz., the great good that it will be the occasion of producing. This is nothing contrary to God's hating sin infinitely, considered as it is in itself, in its own nature, as consisting in the disposition, views, and aims of the sinner; as such, it is the abominable thing which God hates.

There seems to be no great difficulty in making this distinction. We are obliged to make the same, with regard to natural evil, or pain and suffering. This is as truly, (though not in the same sense and degree,) I say, as really contrary to God's nature and will, in itself considered, as moral evil. Yet God is so far reconciled to it, for the sake of the good to be obtained by it, that he is quite willing it should take place; yea, inflicts it in millions of instances, with his own hand. Thus it pleased God to bruise his own Son, to put him to the most amazing pain and torture; not because he delights in pain and misery, in itself considered, but he chose thus to put his Son to pain for the sake of the good to be answered thereby. In this view of things, God was quite willing his Son should suffer, and was pleased with it. Whereas, if there had been no good to be answered thereby, it would have been infinitely contrary to God's nature and will that his Son should be put to such extreme pain. Thus the permission of sin can be accounted for, as easily as we account for the sufferings of Christ, and in the same way, viz., that God chose they both should take place, and, therefore, suffered them to take place, for the sake of the great good they are the means of.

If any should say, "Seeing God chose that his own Son should be put to the most extreme sufferings, and looked on and was pleased with it; and seeing he will inflict such amazing pain on the damned to all eternity, it seems that the pain and misery of his creatures suits him, is agreeable to his will, and he really takes pleasure and delight in it;" I say, if any one should argue in this form, he would talk as consistently, and as much to the purpose, as he who says, "That, seeing God chose to permit sin, therefore sin is agreeable to his will, and he delights in it." Both may be easily answered thus: God wills neither sin nor misery for their own sake, they being, in themselves considered, abstracted from all connections and consequences, most contrary to his nature and will; and was there no good end to be answered by sin or

misery, God would have forever kept them both out of his world; but since they became the occasion and means of so much good, he suffers them both to take place.

If God had no good end to answer by the sin of man, he would have taken effectual care to keep him from sin; but as he intended to make this evil the occasion of so much good, he willingly suffered it to take place.*

2. This view of things affords matter of support and comfort in the darkest times, when sin prevails and abounds most in the world.

He who rules supreme in the heavens, and has all things, even the heart of kings and all men, in his hand; who is the Father of the creation, and has a heart full of benevolence to the universe, and is, therefore, steadily and wisely seeking its good by all he does and by all he permits, — He will bring good out of all this evil; and, therefore, permits it, because it is the best, the wisest way to accomplish his benevolent designs. What reason, then, has the benevolent heart to sink and despond, though sin abounds and threatens to bear all down before it, and every thing is to his view in the utmost disorder and confusion? Let such confide in infinite wisdom and goodness, and rejoice at rest. Let them cast all their care on the *Lord*, and trust in him. Trust, I say, in the *Lord*, and he will bring it to pass. All things thus under God's direction and government are well ordered in the best manner, to answer the best ends; and God will bring more good out of those things which to us have the most dark and threatening aspect than our hearts can easily devise or wish, though how, and in what way, is to us perfectly inconceivable.

* God doubtless sought a *good* in his determination to permit sin; and if this was not a good which he intended to make sin the occasion of, and which could not be so well answered any other way, and for the sake of which he permitted it, then he permitted it as being in itself a good, and so for its own sake. This doctrine, therefore, that God permits sin for the sake of the good he will make it the occasion of, is so far from representing God as taking pleasure in sin, and willing and choosing it should take place for its own sake, that it is the only truth that can prevent his being so represented. If, therefore, one should say, "the works of God are all very *good*," and another should object, "that if so, then God is an *evil* being," he would talk with as much reason and propriety as those who make the objection above.

"There is no inconsistence in supposing that God may hate a thing as it is in itself, and considered simply as evil, and yet that it may be his will it should come to pass, considering all circumstances. God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of any thing evil, though it be his pleasure so to order things that he permitting, sin will come to pass for the sake of the great good that by his disposal shall be the consequence. His willing to order things so that evil should come to pass, for the sake of the contrary good, is no argument that he does not hate evil, as evil; and if so, then it is no reason why he may not reasonably forbid evil as evil, and punish it as such." — *President Edwards on Freedom of Will*, p. 262, etc.

They who have a sincere regard for God's honor, and a tender concern for his church and interest in the world, need some special support in dark and evil times; when Satan and wicked men prevail, and the world lies, as it were, in ruins, and looks no more like God's world; and the interest which they have most at heart, and is in a sense their ALL, seems to be almost given up and lost. I say, when things are in such a situation, the hearts of God's people must sink and be disconsolate, if they had no special and sure support. But this they have in the truth before us. Though God is *a God that hideth himself, and his way is in the sea, his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known;* though in this respect they *walk in darkness, and have no light;* yet they may *trust in the name of the* LORD, *and stay themselves upon their God;* being assured that *the wrath of man shall praise him; and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.* Yea, they may, even in such times, REJOICE; *rejoice that the* LORD *reigneth*, who looks on, and suffers things to take the course they do, because he intends to bring GOOD out of all this evil. *Let Israel* then *rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their* KING. Amen.

SERMON II.

Sin's being the Occasion of great Good no Excuse for Sin, or Encouragement to it.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)
God forbid! For then how shall God judge the world?
For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?
And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.
ROMANS iii. 5–8.

THOUGH SIN IS THE OCCASION OF GREAT GOOD, YET THIS AFFORDS NO EXCUSE FOR SIN, OR THE LEAST ENCOURAGEMENT TO IT.

I. SIN may be, and actually is, the occasion of great good.
II. This affords no excuse for sin, or encouragement to it.

In the preceding discourse, the first proposition was proved and illustrated. The second now comes under our consideration.

This proposition, I am sensible, is greatly opposed by many. We often hear it said by one and another, "If sin is the occasion of so much good; if it is, on the whole, such an advantage to the universe; if God is hereby glorified, and the world is, all things considered, better than if sin had never entered into it; then sin is no crime, and men have all imaginable encouragement to sin." It seems strange that such persons can be ignorant that they are the very successors of those who made the objection St. Paul is confronting in our text, and are risen up in their stead, to oppose Christ and his apostles. That they may be sensible of this, and that such language, which militates so directly against all God's ways to a sinful world, may be no more heard, and their mouths effectually stopped, is what I am now endeavoring.

I hope, therefore, I shall have the serious and close attention of all my hearers, while I endeavor to confirm and illustrate this truth, and set it in as clear and striking a light as I am able.

And I shall attempt this by calling in the united help both of Scripture and reason.

I. Let it be observed, that the truth of this proposition is clearly and abundantly taught in Scripture.

The Holy Bible, the best of books, the best and only infallible guide to us fallen creatures, in this dark, sinful world, in

these important matters, affords us sufficient light and help in the point before us; and therefore, in inquiring into it, I shall endeavor to keep your eyes on this book, and build all my arguments upon it. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii. 20.)

The Scripture not only teaches us in general that sin is most unreasonable, and altogether inexcusable; most offensive to God, and of most dangerous consequence; pernicious and destructive to those who commit it, — I say, it not only teaches this, but also that those very instances of sin, which have been the occasion of the greatest good, were, at the same time, very offensive and provoking to God, and brought his awful judgments upon those who were guilty of it, and in many instances proved the means of their destruction.

What says the Scripture of the sin of Joseph's brethren? Though God meant it unto good, and it was the occasion of so much good, their own conscience, which was the candle of the Lord, God's witness in their breasts, accused them of guilt, and charged it home upon them, when they were in distress. (Gen. xlii. 21, 22.) And even after they saw and shared in some of the great good that came of this evil, they do not excuse themselves for what they had done; neither did their father Jacob, to his dying day, excuse them. But the guilt of this sin still lies on their consciences; and they, by the direction of Jacob their father, (which is as though God had directed them,) go and confess their sin to Joseph, and ask his forgiveness. (Gen. l. 15–17.) And though Joseph forgave them, so far as he had any concern with it, yet he plainly intimates that they were very guilty in God's sight, and must have pardon of him, or they would be undone. "And Joseph said to his brethren, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?" (See verses 19–21.) As if he had said, "Fear no evil from *me;* I shall not take vengeance on you, for your injurious treatment of me; I will not put myself in God's place: vengeance belongeth unto God, and therefore I will not avenge myself. But you had need to see to it that your peace is made with God, or you may expect to feel *his* vengeance."

We have another instance of this in Pharaoh. His sin, as we have heard, was the occasion of great good. Yet his conduct is represented as exceeding vile and criminal, most offensive and provoking to God, and that for which he was at last dreadfully destroyed.

And the Jews' putting our Lord Jesus Christ to death, which was the occasion of such infinite good, is represented

as the most horrid crime, infinitely provoking to God, and of destructive consequence to them as a nation. Of Judas, who had a great hand in this by betraying him unto them, our Lord says, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." (Matt. xxvi. 24.) His own conscience soon felt the weight of his crime; and in the utmost horror he confessed, he had sinned in betraying innocent blood; cast the money he had received as the reward of his iniquity down in the temple, and went away and hanged himself; and went straight to hell, which the Scripture speaks of as "his own place." (Acts i. 25.) And there he now is, weltering in that burning lake, as a due reward for that horrid crime. It avails him nothing to plead, "that thus it must be that the Scripture might be fulfilled." It does not in the least extenuate his crime, nor is it any relief to him, that the innocent blood which he betrayed washes away the sin of the world, and has become the salvation of thousands. And the Jews as a nation, by the hand they had in this, brought upon themselves the high displeasure of Heaven, and most severe and awful judgments, which I have not room here particularly to mention.

Thus we see that the sins of men, which, according to Scripture, God overrules for the greatest good, are at the same time exceeding criminal, and very provoking to God, and greatly expose men to God's wrath, and often bring it upon them. From which it appears that, God being Judge, sin's becoming the occasion of the greatest good does not at all extenuate or lessen the crime, or render those that commit it the less guilty, or afford any excuse to them; and, therefore, that there is not from hence the least encouragement to sin. We here see how God looks upon the matter, and how he will treat men in such cases: and we are sure his judgment is according to truth; and, consequently, that the proposition we are upon is true. Therefore they who think that if good comes of sin, so far sin is excusable, and there is no harm or danger in committing it, are under a great and sad delusion.

But, if it be needful, yet further light may be offered in this matter from the Holy Scripture. This will appear, to all that will observe, that it is the vileness and inexcusable criminalness of sin, and the ill desert of the sinner, that is the very occasion, in many instances, of its answering the good end it does, according to the account the Bible gives of the matter; so that, if the sin was in any degree excusable, and did not render the person that is guilty of it infinitely ill deserving, and so justly expose him to the dreadful wrath of God, it could not answer the good end it does. This is plain, because the good end that sin answers, in many instances, is the

display of God's glory, by his pouring out his wrath on the sinner, and punishing him for it. We have an instance of this in Pharaoh. One great and good end answered by his sin was by God's taking occasion thereby to show his power, and cause his name to be declared throughout all the earth, by pouring out his wrath on Pharaoh for his sin; and, therefore, if Pharaoh had not deserved this wrath for his sin, this end could not have been answered by it. So we are told that the great good that is answered by sinners' obstinacy and final impenitence is by God's showing his wrath, and making his power known, in punishing them eternally for their wickedness. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known." (Rom. ix. 22.) If sin was not infinitely criminal, and did not render those guilty of it infinitely ill deserving, it would not *fit* them for that destruction in which God shows his wrath, and makes his power known.

Surely, all will see how, in this case, the Scripture unites the ill desert of the sinner and his destruction for sin with the good end answered by it; — unites them, I say, so that they cannot be separated; — so that to say sin's answering a good end renders it excusable and harmless is expressly, in words, to separate what God has joined together — yea, things which are, in their own nature, inseparably united, so as necessarily to imply each other. If God's glorifying himself by punishing sin renders sin harmless, and not deserving of punishment, then here is the greatest contradiction; for if sin deserves no punishment, God cannot glorify himself in punishing it: so that, according to this, by the good end's being answered, it is, at the same time, by its being answered, absolutely defeated, and not answered.

Thus full of contradiction and absurdity is such a notion as this, viz., that if sin is the occasion of good, it deserves no punishment; and it is directly contrary to those Scriptures which represent the ill desert of sin as essential, in order to answer the good end it does, and teach that sin becomes the occasion of good, in many instances, by its rendering men the proper subjects of divine wrath, which it could not do if its being the occasion of good rendered it harmless, and men excusable for committing it.

But, though the Scripture is thus clear and express in this matter, yet there may be some who do not see into the reason of it; they cannot see why sin's being the occasion of so much good does not represent it as harmless, and afford encouragement to sin, that those good ends may be answered. I shall, therefore, —

II. Give the *reasons* of it, and show why it is so, still direct-

ing your eye to the Holy Scripture as our help and guide. And here I ask your attention to the following particulars: —

1. The good ends answered by sin is no excuse for it, nor does in the least extenuate its guilt, because sin is still the same in its own nature as if it answered no good end. Sin, as it consists in contradiction to truth and reason and the law of God, is, in its own nature, most unreasonable, ugly, and hateful, and, therefore, criminal and inexcusable; and the consequences of it, whether good or bad, alter not the *nature* of it. Though sin be the occasion of never so much good, yet it is, in its own nature, a contradiction to truth and reason, and, therefore, is, in itself, odious, vile, and criminal. Sin is, therefore, considered in its own nature as consisting in the *unreasonable* disposition, views, and aims of the sinner, infinitely hateful to God, and he is at an infinite distance from feeling any temptation or encouragement to it; and, therefore, all the good God brings out of sin does not in the least abate his hatred of it, or make him look upon it a whit the less criminal, and, consequently, does not at all abate his anger at the sinner, and disposition to punish for sin. And if men looked upon things in this light, — as they do, so far as they see the truth, — and had an answerable disposition of mind, they would not hate sin the less because of the good that it is the occasion of, or imagine themselves at all the more excusable therefor on this account. Moreover, —

2. It is not owing to any good tendency in sin, in itself considered, that it becomes the occasion of good. As sin's being made the occasion of good does not change the nature of it, so neither does it alter its natural tendency. The natural tendency of sin is to the greatest evil; it is big with infinite mischief. Sin aims and tends to dishonor God, and dethrone him — to fill the world with the utmost disorder, confusion, and misery, yea, even to spoil and destroy the universe, so as to make the whole, both Creator and creatures, infinitely worse than nothing. Sin tends to make God infinitely dishonorable, and infinitely miserable, and would actually do so, if God was not able to prevent it. And it tends to make the creature eternally miserable; and its tendency to this is so great and strong, that this would be the infallible consequence if God did not interpose and prevent.

Now God's overruling this which tends to so much evil, which has an unalterable and almost infinite tendency to infinite evil, does not make this tendency to evil a whit more excusable, or the less vile and mischievous, as it is in itself; and, therefore, in no degree removes the guilt and ill desert of it. No thanks to sin that any good comes of it; this is no

argument in its favor, as it is not owing to its harmlessness or good tendency in itself, but to the overruling hand of God, who, by his infinite wisdom and unconquerable power, turns that to good which in itself tends only to evil, and is full of deadly poison.

If the conduct of a man towards his neighbor has a most direct tendency in itself to hurt and undo him, though the mischief is prevented by the overruling providence of God, or the kind interposition of some wise and able friend, — yea, is, by such interposition, turned into the greatest good to him, — this does not render such conduct in any degree the more harmless or excusable, or in the least lessen the guilt and ill desert of it. This truth I suppose every one discerns who is come to the years of discretion, it being a plain dictate of common sense; and I see no difficulty in applying it to the case before us. If the person's conduct towards his neighbor, so full of mischief, and tending directly to his ruin, looks not the better in itself, and is not in the least more excusable for its being overruled to the good of his neighbor, then, surely, the good which God brings out of sin affords no excuse for sin, which is, in its own nature and tendency, infinitely mischievous, and full of deadly evil. I proceed to observe, —

3. As sin, in its own nature and tendency, is as odious, vile, and mischievous as if no good came of it, so the disposition, aim, and end of the sinner is as hateful and vile, as contrary to God and all good, as if no good came of the sin he commits.

As sin, in its own nature, tends to mischief, so the sinner, who is the author of it, aims at that which is unreasonable, mischievous, and destructive. If the sinner could have his will, none of the good which God brings out of sin would follow, but all the mischief imaginable. St. Paul tells us, "The carnal mind is *enmity* against God." (Rom. viii. 7.) The disposition of the sinner, the whole bent of his mind, is in opposition to God and his glory, and all the good that God is seeking. Now the disposition and aim of the sinner is not the better because God prevents the mischief sought taking place, and turns all into good; but the sinner's disposition and end in what he does is as vile, inexcusable, and deserving of God's wrath, as if no good had followed.

Thus, Joseph's brethren thought evil against their brother, and were disposed to injure him. They cared not for his welfare, but aimed to put him into a state of servitude and misery, and thus prevent his dreams coming to pass. Therefore, their disposition and aim in what they did was most unreasonable, and contrary to God's design, and so to all that good

which their selling him was the means of. And now, who can have a better thought of the conduct of Joseph's brethren, or esteem their crime in selling him at all the less because of the good which God brought out of it, so contrary to their intentions?

We are not wont, in the least, to excuse men for their bad designs, and their attempts to do mischief, because they are not able to bring their designs to pass, and the mischief they aim at and attempt to do, does not actually follow. Yea, if their disposition and endeavor to do mischief is the occasion of good, this does not excuse them in our view.

One Verenus gave his neighbor a dose of poison, with an intent to take away his life, and thought he had effected what he aimed at; but, contrary to his expectation and desire, by means of the skilful application of an able physician, the poisonous dose did him no hurt, but, on the contrary, became the means of removing a dangerous disease he labored under, and so of lengthening out his life many years. But no thanks to Verenus for all this. Not one was found who excused him on the account of the good his neighbor had received. No; the whole neighborhood cried out of him as a guilty, murderous wretch. And, verily, in this they spoke the common sense of all mankind; for common sense teaches mankind, in judging how far any one is criminal, not to determine this so much by what is the consequence of what he has done, but by the deed itself which he has done, and his aim and design therein.*

4. Though every sin is made the occasion of great good, yet this affords not the least encouragement to sin; because all do not share in this good, and no one that lives in allowed sin has any evidence that it will be the occasion of good to him, but has reason greatly to fear the contrary.

There are multitudes to whom sin is never the occasion of any good, but it proves to them an infinite evil, even their eternal undoing. They are not the better for all the good that God brings out of sin. They have no benefit of the good which their own sins are the occasion of; but sin proves to

* And if sin is, in its own nature, as ugly and hateful, and in its own natural tendency as pernicious and destructive to the universe, and the disposition of the sinner is as vile and criminal, as contrary to God and all good as if no good came of it, then there is as much reason why it should be hated, detested, and abhorred; why we should be ashamed of it, humbled for it, and renounce it forever, as if God did not overrule it for good. And in this *godly sorrow* essentially consists. Let the Christian consult his own heart, and he will doubtless find that it is in this view of sin he repents, and lies in the dust before God.

Therefore, whatever *good* comes of sin, it tends not in the least to prevent godly sorrow, as some have imagined.

them (what it is in itself, and in its natural tendency) infinitely mischievous and destructive.

Thus it was to Pharaoh. His wickedness was the occasion of great good, but he had none of the benefit of it. His sin was as pernicious and destructive to him as if it had answered no good end at all. This was the occasion of his dreadful overthrow, and, no doubt, of his eternal perdition. This was the case with Judas. He shared in none of the good his sin was the occasion of, but perished in his wickedness. And this is true of every finally impenitent sinner. They see not when good comes, and have no part or lot in this matter; but by their sin become vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

And no one that allows himself in sin has any evidence that this will not be his case. Such have no reason to determine but that every sin they commit will cost them infinitely dear, as they may suffer God's wrath for it to all eternity; and this they have all reason to fear and expect, as the way of allowed sin is the way to destruction, as really so as if sin never answered any good end; yea, they know not but the next sin they commit will be their eternal undoing, as it may provoke God to swear in his wrath that they shall never enter into his rest — to give them up to inevitable ruin.

* Seeing, then, the way of sin is the way to destruction, and none that allow themselves in sin have any evidence, or any reason to expect, that sin will turn to their good, but have the greatest reason to fear and expect the contrary, they have no encouragement to sin because God does overrule all sin so as to make it the occasion of good; for what is this to them, so long as, so far as appears, they are like to have no part nor lot in it? Yea, —

5. They are in the utmost danger of having sin become an unspeakably greater evil to them than if God had not made it the occasion of so much good.

What God has done to bring good out of the evil of sin, makes sin vastly more dreadful to those that continue in it than it would have been had not God done this. Their having the offers of salvation by Christ in consequence of this, will render their continuance in sin much more dreadful than otherwise it would be. And the good that sin is the occasion of, by being a means of God's glory and the advancement of the happiness of the blessed, will greatly aggravate their misery who continue in sin, and make it of vastly more awful consequence to them than if none of this good had been brought out of sin.

This is evident; for the more God is glorified, the more his perfections are discovered to intelligences, the more miserable they must be who are doomed to the eternal hatred and anger

of this God, for the more they see of God the more dreadful his wrath will be to them; and the more happiness the blessed enjoy, the more sensible the damned will be of what they have lost by sin, and consequently the more miserable.

Satan will, doubtless, be eternally more miserable than if God had not taken occasion, by his introducing sin into the world, to glorify himself, and make this a better world than it was before. So all men that continue in sin to final impenitence will be more miserable the more good their sin is made the occasion of; so that this will be not only no good to them, but an infinite evil.

Now, surely, that which makes the continuance in sin infinitely more dreadful than otherwise it would have been, gives it a more deadly sting, and so makes it more dangerous and awful, can be no encouragement to continuance in sin; but, on the contrary, the greatest imaginable discouragement.

6. God's bringing the greatest good out of the evil of sin gives no encouragement or license to sin, because the method God has taken to do this is so contrived that, at the same time it makes sin the occasion of good, it serves to show the infinite hatefulness and ill desert of sin, and the awful consequences of it to the impenitent sinner.

The greatest good that comes by sin is brought about by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In this way the serpent's head is bruised, the works of the devil are destroyed, man is saved, and God is glorified. The death of Christ redeems the world, and is the foundation of the new creation, which so much exceeds the old, by which the world is so much better and more glorious than it would have been if sin had never entered. Now, by the sufferings and death of Christ, God has discovered his hatred of sin, his inflexible resolution to punish it, and the dreadfulness of his wrath, and so the awful consequence of perishing in sin, and set them in a most clear and striking light. God has showed his strict and awful justice, his inflexible resolution to punish sin, so that he will by no means clear the guilty, by punishing his own Son, when he espoused the cause of sinners, and stood in their place; and in the sufferings of the Son of God is shown the dreadfulness of God's wrath, and so the awful consequence of continuing in sin; "for if these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?" Thus God has contrived that the very method he has taken to bring infinite good out of sin should be above any thing else a means of discovering how infinitely hateful and criminal sin is, and how certain and awful is the punishment of it; and so exhibit the greatest discouragement to sin, and the strongest motives to holiness.

God has given a more bright and affecting manifestation to the world of his hatred of sin, of the infinite ill desert of it, and how destructive to the impenitent sinner, in the death of Christ, than could have been given in any other way. And now, how can God's thus making sin the occasion of good be any excuse for sin, or afford the least encouragement to it? Surely, every considerate person must own, that God's thus bringing good out of sin is so far from rendering sin excusable, or affording any encouragement to it, that hereby he has rendered sin most inexcusable, and done that which tends above any thing else to deter men from it.

Mankind have now, as I may say, infinitely more to teach them God's hatred of sin and the infinite punishment it deserves, the certainty of God's punishing it, and the dreadfulness of his wrath, than they would have had, had he not redeemed the world by Christ. And does this encourage men in sin? Surely, no. Nothing could have been better contrived to make men stand in awe, and sin not. The grace of God that brings salvation from sin, and makes sin the means of infinite good by the death of Christ, is so far from giving the least encouragement to sin, that it in the strongest manner teaches men to deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Tit. ii. 12.)

7. The good that God brings out of sin can be no encouragement to commit sin, because as far as a man is inclined to sin, so far his heart is opposite to that good which God brings out of sin; and on the other hand, as far as a person delights in and has a heart to seek and promote that good which God brings out of sin, so far he has a heart to hate and forsake sin and practice holiness.

It is, therefore, one of the greatest contradictions to suppose that the good which God brings out of sin should be an inducement or encouragement to commit sin; for this is for a man to take encouragement to commit sin from holy views and ends, or to love and choose sin out of love to holiness; which surely is the greatest absurdity and contradiction imaginable. It is the same as to say, the more holy a man is, the more he is inclined to sin; or, the more he is like God, the more he resembles the devil!

The good that God brings out of sin suits and pleases his heart; and, therefore, it is a good, agreeable to infinite holiness, as what that acquiesces in and seeks; and as far as men are pleased with, value, and seek that good, so far they are conformed to infinite holiness, i. e., are themselves so far holy, and, therefore, they so far hate sin and renounce it; so far they

are dead to sin, sin is destroyed in them. Now, what a contradiction is it to say that that which destroys sin and roots it out of the heart, is at the same time a motive and encouragement to sin! So far as a man sincerely desires and seeks the good which God brings out of sin, as what suits his heart, so far he acts from right motive and a right end; and, therefore, so far is right, i. e., in the exercise of holiness, and, consequently, so far hates and renounces sin, yea, cannot sin. How, then, can this promote sin, and be an encouragement to it?

St. Paul argues in this manner, in answer to the same question we are upon: "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 1, 2.) This is an absolute impossibility. So far as you see and seek the glory of God in the exercise of his grace, so far you are dead to sin; sin is killed and destroyed in you; for the nature and tendency of sin is to dishonor God, and abuse and trample on his grace. How, then, can we that are dead to sin, as we are, if we desire God's glory in the exercise of his grace, live any longer therein? This would be to seek to destroy the very thing we are at the same time seeking to promote; which is the greatest contradiction. As well may we talk of a dead man's performing the functions of life; yea, as well may the actions of life spring from death, as their foundation and cause, and so a man live purely because he is dead.

The carnal mind, the heart of the sinner, is enmity against God; and so is an enemy to the glory of God, and that happiness which consists in holiness, which God makes sin the occasion of. The heart of the sinner, I say, desires not this good, but is an enemy to it; and consequently the sinner never does any thing with a true design and desire to promote it. Therefore, though sin is the means of promoting this good, yet this neither is nor can be any inducement to a man to commit sin, unless a man can desire to promote that which he hates, and is above all things averse to; and, out of a sincere desire to promote it, does that which has a most direct tendency to the contrary, and is the most perfect exercise of enmity against it.

Thus we see it is absolutely impossible, in the nature of things, that a man should do evil that good may come; or commit sin, that he may promote that good which God makes sin the occasion of. And therefore it is impossible, in the nature of things, that the good which God brings out of sin should be any encouragement to sin. Because so far as any one is a friend to that good, and desires and seeks it, so far he is

an enemy to sin, and necessarily avoids it. And so far as he is disposed to sin, and loves it, so far he pays no regard to the good God brings out of it, but is an enemy to it. If, therefore, any one pretends that he does evil that good may come of it, that the good which God brings out of sin is a motive and encouragement to him to commit sin, we are sure it is only a pretence, and cannot be true; but he commits sin, because he loves it, and seeks a good which is opposite to that which God seeks in permitting sin.

Joseph's brethren, being enemies to the fulfilment of his dreams, which God designed to bring about by means of their selling him, could not be induced and encouraged to sell him for a slave, from a view of answering this end. No, they aimed at something directly contrary to this; and if they had pretended they sold him into slavery, out of a desire that his dreams might be fulfilled, Joseph would have known it was a piece of gross hypocrisy. For if they had desired his dreams should come to pass, they would have loved him, and been tender of him, and therefore would have had no heart to exercise that cruelty towards him they were guilty of.

This may be further illustrated (if it is not plain enough already) in the instance of Pharaoh. It was impossible that he should do as he did, if he had desired and sought the good God intended to answer by him. If he had desired that God's name should be glorified, and his church and people be safe and happy, he would not have refused to hearken to the God of the Hebrews, nor trample on his authority, and bid defiance to him as he did; but would have cheerfully obeyed all his commands. And he would not have oppressed Israel as he did; and therefore it was not possible he should commit the sin he did, with a design and desire that this good might come of it. No, he was an enemy to that good which God designed; and therefore acted like an enemy, and committed the great wickedness he did.

And this is the case with all that live in sin. They love sin, and commit it, because they are enemies to the good which God brings out of sin. Only make them friends to that good, and their aims and designs conformable to God's, and this will cure them of allowing themselves in sin, and make them renounce it forever. Therefore, I say, it is absolutely impossible that a man should allow himself in sin, that good may come of it; I mean the good that God designs by sin. And therefore, whatever pretences any may make to this, we may be sure it is not so.

Indeed, men aim at and seek good, in all the sin they commit. Something, which appears to them to be good, which

they aim to obtain by sin, is always the motive and inducement to sin. But this is always a good, which is not only of a different kind from that which God seeks, but directly contrary to it.

But here the following question may arise in the minds of some, viz.: —

If God permits sin for the sake of the good he brings out of it, and so aims at this good in permitting sin, why may not men aim at the same good in committing sin, and so sin for the same end for which God permits it? How can it be impossible for a man to aim at the same thing in committing sin that God aims at in permitting it?

Answer. That this cannot be, is owing to the nature of sin itself. It is because sin is what it is, viz., an opposition to God in his ways, his inclinations, ends, and designs. In this, sin essentially consists; even in the opposition of men's hearts, in their inclinations and ends, to God's inclination and designs. Therefore, when it is asked, why a man cannot commit sin, for the same end for which God permits it? — it is just the same as to ask, why a man may not have the same end and design that God has, in that very act which consists in opposing God's aims and designs? That is, why a man's aims and designs may not be the same with God's, which at the same time are perfectly contrary thereto? — which is no other than to ask, why the most perfect contradiction may not be consistent?

The more men's inclinations, ends, and designs are conformable to God's, and the more they see what the inclination of God's heart is, and understand his ends and designs, the more they are pleased with them and with all God's ways, and the more they see God's wisdom in permitting sin; and, therefore, the more pleased they are with his permitting sin for the ends he does. But this is so far from making them like sin, or love it, and be well pleased with it, that the more they are pleased with God's conduct in permitting sin, the more they hate sin, the more contrary it is to their hearts. God is infinitely holy in permitting sin; and the more holy men are, and so, the more they hate sin, the more well pleased they are with God's permitting sin, and the more they fall in with his designs herein.

St. Paul, now in heaven, approves of, and is pleased with God's permitting sin, for the sake of the good he makes it the occasion of, in a much higher degree than when on earth. He is perfectly pleased with it now. And the more he is pleased with it, and falls in with God's ends and designs

herein, the further he is from sinning, and the more impossible it is that he should be guilty of it.

Thus I have endeavored to lay before you, my hearers, the evidence of the proposition I undertook to prove; and now leave it with every one of you to judge for yourselves, whether there is not evidence enough from Scripture and reason abundantly to convince every honest, attentive mind, that sin's being the occasion of the greatest good affords no excuse for sin; and whether it has not been now even demonstrated that this can give no encouragement to sin.

I have dwelt the longer on this point, because I think it of importance that it should be well understood. May the great Head of the church grant that we all may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and so have a heart to understand and approve all God's ways. Amen.

SERMON III.

The Holiness and Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin, and his Will herein perfectly agreeable to his revealed Will.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)
God forbid! For then how shall God judge the world?
For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?
And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.
ROMANS iii. 5–8.

THAT sin is the occasion of great good, even so much that there is more good in the universe than would have been had there been no sin; and that this being the case, affords no excuse for sin, or the least encouragement to it, are the truths which have been considered, illustrated, and confirmed in the foregoing discourses on these words. What now remains is the

IMPROVEMENT.

The view we have had of this subject opens the way to the following remarks: —

I. God's holiness is exercised even in the permission of sin. God's permitting sin was as high an exercise of holiness as any we can think of. This remark is grounded on what has been observed and proved, viz., that sin is the occasion of promoting the greatest good of the universe.

The holiness of God primarily consists in *love*, or benevolence to himself and to the creature, in the exercise of which, he seeks his own glory and the happiness of the creature; or, in one word, he seeks the good of the universe, as comprehending both Creator and creatures. And this God aimed at and sought in permitting sin, as much as in any act whatever, and therefore this was an exercise of holiness, even to permit sin; for God permitted sin, because he saw that this was the best way to promote this end, and accomplish the highest good of the universe.

If this was not the case, if there is not, on the whole, more good in the universe than there would have been if God had not permitted sin to enter into the world, then it cannot be shown how it is consistent with God's holiness to permit sin. But if this is the case, as the Scripture represents it to be,

then the permission of sin is not only consistent with God's holiness, but God's not permitting it would be inconsistent with holiness; for, not to permit sin in this case, would be to neglect and slight the greatest good, and to prefer it to a less, which is inconsistent with true love to the universe. The permission of sin, therefore, is so far from being inconsistent with God's holiness, that his holiness influenced him to permit sin, and herein is eminently exercised and gloriously manifested.

Objection. But God could not permit sin out of love to *all;* for sin certainly is not for the good of all, but proves the eternal ruin of multitudes.

Answer. The greatest good of the whole may be inconsistent with the good of every individual. God seeks the greatest good of the whole. This his holiness, his love to himself and the creation, leads him to. It does not follow that there is, on the whole, less good in the universe by means of sin because some, yea, a great number, are eternally miserable by it. Notwithstanding this, God may be more glorified, yea, there may be more happiness among creatures than if sin had never taken place; for, though sin is the means of the eternal misery of many, yet it may be the means of increasing the happiness of others to so great a degree as that, upon the whole, there shall be more happiness than if there had been no sin.*

Objection. But where is the justice of making a number miserable in order to promote the good of others, even though we grant there is, upon the whole, more good than if there had been no sin?

Answer. They who are made miserable by sin, are justly miserable. Sin is their own fault, and for it they deserve eternal destruction; and, therefore, God does them no wrong in casting them into hell; they have but their desert. And the good that sin is the means of to others does not alter the case as to them, and make their misery unjust. We may apply to this case the words of St. Paul, Rom. xi. 22. Here we may behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fall into destruction, severity; but on them which are saved, goodness. God exercises severity towards some, but it is a just severity. It is as just as if no good came to others by means of sin.

Let none, then, object against God's permitting sin, as if

* If this is a paradox to the reader, he may find this matter illustrated and set in a clear and rational view by the Rev. Mr. Bellamy, in his Sermons on the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin. — See *Bellamy's Works*, vol. ii. p. 7.

it was inconsistent with his holiness, as if it made him the author of sin, and represented him as delighting in sin, etc. For it is most evident to those who will impartially consider the matter, that God's holiness is as much exercised, and as really appears in his permitting sin, as in any of his conduct whatsoever.

If any should here say that I mistake the matter, that these objections are not made against God's permitting sin; this is a fact that none can dispute, and all must grant God may permit sin and yet be holy. God had a right to permit sin, as he was by no means obliged to withhold all his creatures from sinning. I say, if any should talk in this form, I would ask, what it is then that they object against, as inconsistent with God's holiness?

Do they object against God's permitting sin for the sake of the good he saw he could make it the occasion of? Do they think this inconsistent with God's holiness, that he should aim at a good end in permitting sin? Surely none can think so; for God's holiness in permitting sin consists in his aiming at, and seeking good thereby. So that God's permitting sin for the sake of the good that should come thereby is so far from being inconsistent with his holiness, that it is the very thing in which his holiness is exercised in permitting sin; and if he could permit sin, and aim at and seek no good thereby, there would be no holiness in permitting sin; yea, it would be inconsistent with holiness.

To say that God's seeking good by the permission of sin is inconsistent with his holiness, is the same as to say, that God's exercising holiness is inconsistent with his holiness, and, therefore, in order to be holy, he must cease to exercise holiness; and if God's aiming at good in permitting sin is not the thing they object against, what is it then? Where is the difficulty? What is there in God's permitting sin that should make him the author of sin?

Is God's *determining* to permit sin the thing that is inconsistent with holiness? Are there any who allow that God may permit sin, and be wise and holy in so doing, but at the same time imagine his determining to permit sin is inconsistent with his holiness, makes him the author of the sin he determines to permit?

One would think none could make a difficulty of this, and think and talk in this form, if this did not seem to be actually the case with some. They make great objections against something, and represent it as a horrible doctrine, inconsistent with God's holiness, making him the author of sin, and what not; and when the matter comes to be examined to the bottom,

the thing they object against is, God's determining to permit sin. They own God has actually permitted sin, but will not believe God ever determined to permit it, because this reflects on his moral character and makes him the author of sin.

To remove this difficulty, therefore, I would say a few words: —

1. I would ask, whether any can possibly conceive of God's permitting sin without determining to permit it? Surely God determines to do all he does; therefore, to say God did not determine to permit sin, is the same as to say he did not permit sin. If, then, God has permitted sin, he certainly determined to permit it.

2. If God had a right to permit sin, and is wise and holy in so doing, then he had a right to determine to permit sin, and is wise and holy in determining to permit it. If any piece of conduct is, in itself, proper and wise, then determining to conduct so cannot be wrong. Therefore, to say that God's determining to permit sin is not wise and holy, is to say that permitting sin is not wise and holy. For there can be no harm in determining to do that, in doing which there is no harm; but on the contrary, a determination to do that which is wise and holy is a wise and holy determination.

Some may, perhaps, think I have not touched the difficulty there is in this matter yet. They believe God has permitted sin for wise and good ends, and, therefore, that he determined to permit it. But they say, some hold that God *decreed* to permit sin; and it is God's *decree* in this case which they object against, as little better than blasphemy, as it seems to make God the author of sin.

To this I would say, I am willing to leave the word *decree* out of the question, and not to insist upon it, or so much as mention it, as it is a word that is become hateful and frightful to many. They have, by some means or other, affixed such horrible ideas to it, that it cannot be used without giving them great disgust. I, indeed, suppose that to decree to permit sin, and to determine to permit it, is precisely one and the same thing, they being only two different words to denote one and the same idea. However, I am willing to drop the word *decree*, and have no contention about it. They who are reconciled to God's permitting sin, and his doing it for wise and good ends, and so believe that this is not inconsistent with his holiness, but that the permission of sin is itself an exercise of infinite holiness, they consent to all I am endeavoring to make evident in this remark; and though they may be insensible of it, they indeed consent to all that is implied in the doctrine of God's decreeing to permit sin; and what then

is become of the frightful objection against the doctrine of God's decrees, as if it made God the author of sin, which we so often hear from great and small, learned and unlearned? I trust it cannot stand the test of Scripture and reason, but being impartially examined, appears groundless and most absurd; which I humbly think is in some measure manifest by what is said above.

The truth is, all this noise is, at bottom, made against God's permitting sin. By proving God's holiness in this, therefore, the objection is wholly demolished.*

I think it of importance that all should be convinced of this. If, therefore, what has been said affords any light and evidence to this truth, the labor is not lost.

II. God's will in permitting sin is perfectly consistent with his holy law which he hath given unto man, or his revealed will.

Some have been unable to reconcile these together, and make them consistent. But what has been said on this subject I think removes the difficulty, and helps us to see the consistency and perfect agreement between these two.

The sum of what God requires of man in his law is love to

* I am aware it will be said, that "all this does not vindicate the doctrine of God's decrees; for though one objection is given up, and it is granted that this does not make God the author of sin, yet it takes away all blame from man, and makes it impossible that there should be any such thing as sin in the universe; for God's decree takes away all *liberty* from man, and, therefore, he cannot sin in what he does."

Answer. What if God determined to make man *free*, and to permit him to sin in the exercise of his freedom; does this take away man's liberty? Strange! if God's decreeing to make man free, and to permit him to sin in the exercise of this liberty, should take away all liberty; as strange, at least, as if God's determining to make man and give him existence should eternally deprive him of being.

Objection. What God has decreed will certainly come to pass; and, therefore, introduces a *necessity* which is inconsistent with liberty, and so with virtue or vice. When, therefore, you say, God decreed to permit man to sin in the exercise of his liberty, you are guilty of a contradiction in terms, and suppose that which is impossible, viz., that the certainty implied in God's decree is consistent with liberty.

Answer. Please to mind that this objection is made as much against God's foreknowledge as his decrees; for foreknowledge supposes and implies the certainty of the actions foreknown as much as any decree can do. But how will you prove that the certainty of future actions and events is inconsistent with liberty? on which the objection is wholly built. Prove this, and the Bible will be overthrown at once, and the common sense of mankind will appear to be a mere delusion. The Bible is, as it were, wholly planned on the supposition of the certainty of all the future actions of men. It represents God as foreknowing all things, and predicts millions of actions, and represents men as free in those very actions that are pointed out beforehand; and do mankind, in order to determine whether a man is free in what he does, first inquire what degree of certainty there was that he would act just as he has done? Surely, no. This objection, therefore, is directly contrary to the Bible and all reason.

God, and love to man; (Matt. xxvii. 37–39;) which love is principally exercised in desiring and seeking God's glory and the good of man. But God, in permiting sin, desired and sought his own glory and the good of man, and, therefore, exercised the same disposition that his law requires of man, and willed and chose the same thing which he requires man to will and choose in his law; and, therefore, the more a man obeys God's law, revealed in his word, the nearer conformed he is to God's disposition and will which he exercised in the permission of sin.

Now this being so, it is a conclusive argument that God's will in permitting sin is the same, or perfectly consistent, with his will revealed in his law; for it is a maxim that never fails, that, "if any two things agree with a third, they also agree with one another." If, therefore, the holiness of man, which is a conformity to God's law, is also a conformity to God's disposition and will, exercised in permitting sin, then God's disposition and will, in permitting sin, and his law, are conformable one to the other.

God's permission of sin was an act of benevolence to the universe, in which he sought the good of being in general. The sum of what God's law requires of man is benevolence to being in general. Therefore, God's law is a true expression of his disposition and will which he exercised in permitting sin, and is, indeed, the very same will expressed and revealed, requiring man to conform thereto. Or, thus: —

God seeks his own glory, and the good of the creature, in permitting sin; and so his permitting sin is an exercise of holiness. But if God's disposition and will, exercised in the permission of sin, is a holy disposition and will, then it must be agreeable to his revealed will, for that is a holy will. God's revealed will is but an expression of his holiness, and, therefore, it is but an expression of that holiness which he exercised in permitting sin, which consisted in his disposition and will, and, consequently, is perfectly agreeable to it.

I trust my hearers see the force of this argument which I am endeavoring to state. The argument cannot be got rid of, I think, but by denying that God seeks the general good of the universe in permitting sin, which I trust none will do who believe the Bible, and have any right notions of the perfections of God.*

* And is not this sufficient forever to silence the common objection against the doctrine of God's decrees, viz., that, according to this, God has a secret will which is contrary to his revealed will? For, if God's *permitting* sin is not contrary to his revealed will, then his *determining* or *decreeing* to permit it is not.

This objection against the doctrine of God's decrees has been urged by many

III. What cause have we to admire and adore the *wisdom* of God, which is so gloriously exercised and displayed in making sin, which is the greatest evil, the occasion of the greatest good, and in doing this exhibits the greatest imaginable discouragement to sin, and the strongest motives to holiness!

Well may we join with St. Paul, and cry out, "O the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God!" Satan thought when he had seduced man he had gained his point — had disappointed, and, as it were, outdone and overmatched, the Almighty, and spoiled and robbed him of the world he had made. How may we imagine the "old serpent" swelled with pride, and vaunted himself on this occasion! The good angels doubtless beheld what was done with a sort of astonishment and surprise, and thought the world ruined and lost; and no creature could conceive how the mischief could be retrieved, and all this evil turned into good. But God looked on, and, as it were, said, —

"Satan thinks he has crossed and outdone me now, and lots on an eternal triumph. But he shall be wholly disappointed and defeated, and it shall appear in the end that he has by this only been an instrument of promoting my great and good designs. Sin, which, above all things, strikes at my throne, aims to dishonor me, and in its own nature has a direct tendency to spoil and ruin the works of my hands, and which is, in itself, infinitely mischievous and hateful, — even this greatest and most deadly evil I will make the special means of my own exaltation and honor. From this I will take occasion to fill the earth with my glory, and make it a much better world than it was before; and herein I will manifest and display my infinite wisdom to be matter of entertainment, wonder, and admiration to millions to all eternity."

And God, by thus exalting and glorifying himself, and happifying the redeemed, by means of sin, has, at the same time condemned sin, shown his hatred of it, and revealed his wrath against it, and set this in a far more convincing and striking light than he would have done if he had not thus brought good out of sin. This God has done by bringing all this about by the sufferings and death of Christ. If the sinner had been saved without any satisfaction made to divine justice, and regard to the honor of God's law, which by sin was

noted writers with as much confidence, and show of boasted reason and argument, as any thing that has been advanced in opposition to the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism; and perhaps *all* that has been said in opposition to these doctrines will appear as weak and absurd, — as I trust this now does, — whenever the voice of Scripture and reason shall be suitably attended to.

violated, sin would not have been sufficiently condemned, but the holy law of God would rather have been disgraced. In this, therefore, there would have been no manifestation of God's holiness and hatred of sin. But by saving sinners through the sufferings and death of Christ, God's justice and holiness shine brighter than if there had never been any sin, or all sinners had been damned eternally; and God's hatred of sin and love of righteousness are set in the most advantageous light; and the evil nature of sin, and the infinitely dreadful consequence of continuing in sin, appear in the clearest and most affecting view, tending above all things to make men afraid of sin, and lead them to hate it and renounce it forever.

The gospel is so calculated to discourage sin and promote holiness, at the same time that it brings the greatest good out of sin, that whoever understands it, and believes the truth of it, is thereby transformed into the holy image of God. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Thus the gospel is so far from encouraging sin, that it is the great instrument in the hand of God of turning men from sin to holiness: yea, God hath so contrived things in the gospel that it becomes the means of making men much more holy than they would have been if they never had sinned; and it advances their happiness by discovering God's holiness, and promoting theirs.

God has so contrived things that sin is not only the occasion of displaying his holiness, but the occasion of *more* holiness in the creature than if it had never taken place. How is Satan disappointed and defeated herein! while his sin, and the sin which he introduced among mankind, is made the means of a most bright display of God's holiness, and of filling heaven with more holiness, and so with more happiness, to all eternity than otherwise there would have been.

How infinitely above all creatures in *wisdom* does God appear in this work! This is, by way of eminency, "*the wisdom of God*," as St. Paul styles it. (1 Cor. i. 24.) Well may we then rejoice and glory in this gospel, and say, with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." And at the same time the sinner is saved from sin by faith in Christ, "the wrath of God is," in the clearest manner, "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

"Into these things the angels desire to look." And it is *here* that they see and learn "the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.)

Indeed, this is seen but in part now by angels and men. The more bright display of it will be made at the consum-

mation of all things, when this work of God shall be brought to perfection, and the good that shall be brought out of sin shall be seen in all its fulness and glory. And as the Jews, to whom the wickedness of Haman was the occasion of so much good, had their sorrow turned into joy, and their mourning into a good day, and had many a day of feasting and joy upon this occasion, so shall *this* be the occasion of joy among millions, while they give all the praise and glory to the *only wise God*, through Jesus Christ, forever and ever.

I shall, in the next place, improve this subject in expostulating a little with two sorts of persons.

I. With those who will not allow that God makes sin the occasion of good, and that he did, therefore, permit sin that he might bring good out of it, and say that such a doctrine gives a full license, yea, the greatest encouragement, to sin. Such persons, whenever they hear this doctrine taught, cry out of it as tending to encourage sin. They say, "If this is true, then the best way is for all to sin as much as they can, that good may come of it; for the more sin the better."

If such persons well considered what has been said on this subject, I think they must be convinced of the gross and dangerous mistake they have made; and that this conviction may be fastened on the mind of every such one, I would offer the following things by way of expostulation: —

1. I entreat you to consider how contrary to all reason this is.

It has been proved, I think, beyond all contradiction, that, though sin is made the occasion of the greatest good, yea, though all things considered, there is more good in the universe than if sin had not entered, yet this does not render sin at all the less criminal, or afford any excuse to it; but, on the contrary, it appears undeniably evident that God has taken such a method to bring good out of sin, that he has hereby exhibited to all intelligences the greatest possible discouragements to sin, and set it in a most odious and criminal light. Yea, it is evident to a demonstration, that it is, in the nature of things, absolutely impossible that any one should be induced to sin by the good that God brings out of it. And will you still go on to assert that God's bringing good out of sin is an encouragement to it, and gives full liberty to all to go on in sin? If you do so, you must, so far as I can see, first lay aside your own reason and conscience, and will hereby prove that you are not to be reasoned with; for it is in vain to reason with men who will pay no regard to reason.

2. Consider how contrary this is to the Holy Scripture.

Nothing is clearer in the Bible, than that God brings good

out of sin, and that God permits sin for the sake of the good he makes it the occasion of. The Bible is built on this plan. In this consists the glorious work of redemption, which is the chief subject of the whole Bible. In this the wisdom and glory of God appear and are displayed, and on this all our well-grounded hopes are built. The great good we hope for, is a good that is to be brought out of sin. And the Bible teaches us, at the same time, how odious and criminal sin is, and offers the greatest discouragements to sin and motives to holiness. Our text is most directly against you. If you will carefully read it over, you will find yourselves pointed out and expressly condemned in it. I do not see how you can well make a declaration more contrary to the Bible than this, which is so often found in your mouths. And it is quite evident that you cannot really like such a book as the Bible is, however you may pretend, or even yourselves think you do.

3. Such would do well to consider how very dishonorable this is to God, yea, how directly they speak against him.

That sin is come into the world, and that the world is full of it, they cannot deny. But they will not allow that God permitted it; but it came in contrary to his will and design, as what he could not prevent. Or, if he did permit it, they will not allow him to have any good end in permitting it; but he permitted sin, he knew not why, or, rather, for some bad end. For, at the same time, it would have been better if he had not permitted it. And now he has permitted sin out of no good end, or since sin has come into the world in spite of him, as he could not prevent it, they will not allow him to make the best of it, and bring good out of it; because, if he does so, he will excuse and justify the sinner, and give all imaginable encouragement to sin, and make himself unreasonable and unrighteous in forbidding and punishing it.

And now, what a deity, what a god is this! Surely this is not the true God. How impotent and weak, how contemptible, is such a god! How disappointed and unhappy, while outdone, conquered, and triumphed over by his greatest enemy, and he not able to help himself! If things were so, they would be, so far, just as the devil would have them. He would be glad to fill the world with sin in spite of God. He would rejoice to have God's hands tied so that he could not prevent sin. Or if he could prevent it, and so it must come in by his permission, he would have God permit it without proposing any good end in it, or without being able to answer any by it. The devil would be glad to have it so that God could not bring any good out of sin, without at the same time encouraging sin and excusing the sinner. Thus, this sets the

devil up, as doing his will, at least on earth, and as having power above the Almighty — power to fill the world with sin and mischief, which God could not prevent; or if he could, now he has suffered it to take place, can by no means help himself in the matter by making it answer some good end.

What mean and unworthy notions must such have of God! They degrade him almost as low as the idols of the heathen, which have eyes, but see not; hands, but handle not; feet, but walk not. They represent him, either as not seeing the bad consequences of sin, or unable to prevent them though they were seen, or bring any good out of sin; and so as having, in a great degree, lost the world he had made.

God grant none of us may have such dishonorable thoughts of him. No; "*our* God is in the heavens, — he hath done whatsoever he pleased. He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? And those that walk in pride he is able to abase." He was infinitely able to keep sin out of the world he had made; and consequently he permitted it to take place, and that because he saw it would be the occasion of the greatest good, an advantage to the universe. And he is continually governing the world, and ordering all events so as to answer the great and good ends he proposed in the permission of sin, and will, in the end, completely accomplish all the purposes and desires of his heart. And at the same time he brings good out of sin, he more clearly discovers his hatred of sin and its desert, and exhibits greater discouragements to sin and stronger motives to holiness than if no good had been brought out of sin. The devil shall be utterly and perfectly defeated and overthrown, with all finally impenitent sinners, and God shall be glorified by all they have done, and elect angels and men shall reap advantages from it to all eternity. That *such a God* reigns, may well be matter of joy to all; and let those who think and speak against him repent and reform, and give glory to God.

II. I would expostulate, in a word or two, with those who make a handle of this doctrine, that sin answers some good ends, to excuse and encourage themselves and others in sin. They take it for granted that all sin answers some good end, and profess to believe that this is a doctrine of the Bible; and often speak of this as a palliation and excuse for their sin, and the sin of others, and as if this was an inducement to it. Now, such are desired seriously to consider the following things: —

1. By drawing, and acting upon such a consequence, you renounce the Bible. For, as has been shown, nothing can be

more contrary to the Scripture than this. Now, by renouncing the Bible, you renounce the doctrine from whence you pretend to draw this consequence, and take encouragement to sin, and so build upon nothing at last; for in your very building, you pull down the foundation you pretend to build upon. "The Bible," you say, "teaches that sin is made the occasion of good." Very well, so it does. "Well, then," you say, "this is a great encouragement to sin; let us sin that good may come." But this you know the Bible disallows of. And if the Bible is not to be minded in this case, then it is not to be depended upon when it reveals the doctrine from which you draw this consequence and encourage yourself to sin. Thus men must contradict themselves, as well as the Bible, in order to make any such improvements of this doctrine.

2. You do not value and desire that good which God brings out of sin, and therefore never felt any encouragement from this to sin, as it has been proved that no man ever did, or possibly can do. As, therefore, you pretend to that which is impossible, it is nothing but pretence and hypocrisy in you. You care nothing about God's glory, and the holiness and happiness of the angels and saints; you are after a good of your own, which has no relation to this good. If you could promote a million degrees of the good which God makes sin the occasion of, by lifting up your finger, you would not do it. Surely, then, this was never any encouragement to you to sin.

3. They who thus abuse this doctrine are certainly in the way to eternal destruction. And if you continue thus to abuse this glorious truth of the gospel all your days, you will fall under the condemnation denounced against such in the text, and the justice of God will shine bright in your eternal damnation. You will not see when good comes, or have any part or lot in this matter, as your heart is not right with God, but in direct opposition to him. You will be shut out in darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. But Christ's throne shall be guiltless, and established in righteousness; and on his seed shall be light, and peace, and joy forever. God will be forever glorified, and answer his own ends in your eternal damnation.

I conclude all with a word of exhortation.

I. Let all hence be exhorted to seek after the knowledge of God's ways, and a heart to justify and approve of them.

1. Seek after the knowledge of God's ways.

It becomes us to cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding; to seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures, if by any means we may find the knowledge

of God. But how shall we find the knowledge of God? Why, no other way but by searching into his works, as they are held up to our view in creation, providence, and divine revelation. It is by understanding God's ways that we come to the knowledge of God. God discovers himself to creatures only by his ways and works. These are the glass held forth in the Bible, in which the glorious God is exhibited to creatures. And it becomes us to search into them with diligence, care, and painful study. "The works of God are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." They are *sought out* with diligent application of mind and earnest inquiry. He that is slothful, and inattentive to these matters, he, I say, is "the brutish man that knoweth not, and the fool that doth not understand this."

It is to be lamented that so many are no more inquisitive after the truth; are even too lazy and careless to inquire and examine for themselves, and so make no proficiency in Christian knowledge, but are quite ignorant, and groping in the dark in the midst of the rich means of instruction we enjoy. St. Paul speaks to Christians as under obligation to make proficiency in knowledge, and blames them much that when for the time they ought to be teachers of others, they had need that one should teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God, and exhorts them not to rest in the knowledge of the first principles of Christianity, but to go on to perfection. (Heb. v. 12; vi. 1.)

I know it is insisted on by many as a maxim of importance, "that we content ourselves with the plain, indisputable things of religion, and not meddle with dark, intricate, and disputable points."

But this is, I think, as much as to say, "Be sure to take no pains to inquire into and understand what you know not already, but be content to live and die in ignorance." For what is there plain to a person which he does not already know? And what is there which is not dark and unintelligible until by thought and application of mind it is understood? And what peculiar doctrine of Christianity is there that is not disputed, or looked upon as dark and intricate, by some?

I have different, and, I trust, better advice to give you, my hearers. Search the Scriptures daily, that you may know whether these things are so. Strive to grow in knowledge, that you may not be babes, but strong men, who, by reason of use, have your judgment exercised to discern both good and evil. And in order to this, prove, examine *all things*, and hold fast that which is good.

The most of God's ways revealed to us in the Bible have respect to sin, or do some way relate to it, (such as his permitting it, punishing it, redeeming men from it, and bringing good out of it.) If, therefore, we do not understand this, we know but little of God and his ways. Let us, then, search the Bible; and, at the same time, constantly and earnestly cry to the Father of lights, that he would teach us his ways, and open our eyes to behold the wonderful things in his word.

Seek a heart to approve of all God's ways. This will lay the best, and, indeed, the only foundation, of rightly knowing God's ways. This is, in a true sense, to have an understanding heart. In this true wisdom consists. Knowledge will be easy to him who has this understanding, while the scorner (whose heart opposes God's ways) seeketh wisdom and findeth not. (Pr. xiv. 6.) "The meek (who have a humble, pliable, submissive heart) will God guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." (Ps. xxv. 9.) "Who is wise, (truly holy,) and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." (Hos. xiv. 9.) "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." (Dan. xii. 10.) He who has a heart to do God's will, he is most likely to know of the doctrines he inquires into, whether they be of God or not; he cometh to the light. But he whose heart opposes God's ways hateth the light, and holds the truth in unrighteousness, or turns aside to error and delusion, and embraces falsehood because he loves to have it so. How unhappy is the man who has a lie in his right hand, and cannot deliver his soul because his heart, his corrupt heart, has turned him aside from the truth! This, it is to be feared, is the sad case of many at this day. They have no heart to love the truth; therefore God has left them to strong delusion — to believe a lie.

God's professing people of old said, his ways were not equal. God's ways did not suit their hearts at all. And they are as contrary to the unsanctified heart now as they were then, and are doubtless as much opposed and murmured against, though under a pretence that they are not God's ways.

Let us, then, be greatly concerned to have our hearts right with God. To this end, may God take away the heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh, in which his laws are written; and by this direct our hearts into the love of God as he is revealed in his word.

II. What has been said on this subject may be improved

as a motive to all to give themselves up to God through Jesus Christ; to trust in him for deliverance from all the evil of sin, from sin itself, and from all the evil consequences of it, and that you may share in all that great good that God makes sin the occasion of.

Thus to save and bless sinful man Christ came into the world, suffered, and died; and of this we now have the offer. If you give yourselves up to Christ, you shall be completely saved from all your sins. He will deliver you from the awful wrath of God, and all the dreadful evils that are coming on an ungodly world. He will wash you and make you clean. He will deliver you from all sorrow, and wipe all tears from your eyes. He will bestow all the blessings on you that you can wish for. He will clothe you with glorious robes, with a righteousness more beautiful and glorious than that of angels, a righteousness which never would have been had not creatures sinned. He will bring you to God, and introduce you to a greater nearness to him, and a higher enjoyment of him, than man would have been admitted to if he had never fallen. He will cause you to sit down on his throne, and make you to share in his honor, glory, and happiness. In sum, you shall share in all the good that is brought out of sin, and be eternal gainers by the sin and misery that has filled the world. O, let no sinner disregard and slight these kind and advantageous offers; let him not neglect the glorious Saviour another day, lest it should then be eternally too late, and he be infinitely worse off than if he had never heard the joyful news now proclaimed.

III. Let all hence be excited to seek and endeavor to promote the same ends that God seeks and promotes by the permission of sin. This is (as has been shown) the glory of God and the good of the creature. This is to be holy, and so conformed to God and his law. God seeks these ends in the exercise of his holiness, and we have no other way to seek them but in holy exercises in keeping God's commands. All that God has done in permitting sin and bringing good out of it, all that he has revealed in his word, and all that he will do to the end of the world, tends to excite to holiness. Let us, then, seek to be holy as he is holy. God hates sin infinitely, and is infinitely engaged to punish it, and woe to us if we do not forsake it and turn to God now while his patience lasts! for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. May you all so know the Lord and be made partakers of his holiness, as that your hearts may echo to the angelic doxology, while they cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. Amen.

APPENDIX.

When these sermons were first published, it was not thought that any of the true friends of Jehovah and his kingdom would be offended with the doctrine, that things, even all the sin that has taken place in his dominions, shall, on the whole, be no injury to his kingdom, but be overruled by him for the great advantage and glory of it forever: yea, it was presumed that this truth would be matter of great joy to all such, and that they would attend to the abundant evidence which we have of it in the Word of God, with a peculiar pleasure; but, however unaccountable it may be, numbers of these professed friends to God, his honor, happiness, and kingdom, have appeared greatly displeased with this doctrine, and have spoken much against these sermons, chiefly because it was asserted and vindicated.

Mr. D. appears to be one of these, by what he published some years ago in his sermon on "The Inscrutability of divine Providence." There he has the following words: "That sin has been of great advantage to the creation, through divine interposition, some (of confused heads, but sufficiently opinionated) have undertaken to show. But to prove that the happiness of the creation would have been less, provided sin had never entered into the world, they must first be able to tell us what would in fact have been, had all reasonable beings continued innocent — which neither men nor angels can."

Every one, I suppose, who has seen the title of the preceding sermons, will be at no loss in determining who the author had a particular reference to in these words, though he has, I suppose, inadvertently made a material alteration by using the word *creation* instead of *universe*, which includes all existence, created and uncreated. How far the words in the parenthesis show the clearness of the author's head, and his great candor and humility, the reader will judge. Be this as it may, I think I have good ground to say, that if, instead of this parenthesis, he had showed wherein the confusion of the head or the weakness of the arguments offered in support of this doctrine was to be discovered, he would have given more satisfaction to all his judicious, candid readers. But this he has not essayed to do. Yea, so far from this was he, that he has asserted, over and over again, what is really the same thing which he so severely censures in the words just quoted.

He particularly considers the permission of sin as an important article in which the divine providence is concerned, and allows that God did permit sin when he might have prevented it; and he says, "The plan of his administration is uniform and fixed, in which the best adapted means are improved to accomplish his general design, which is plainly benevolent. The general view of his administration is, therefore, benevolent; his wisdom and power are, therefore, employed in carrying on designs of the greatest good." If God, in his providence, and, therefore, in the permission of sin, in every instance of which his providence is concerned, is benevolent, and designs the greatest good, then the permission of sin does promote this design, and an-

swer this end, and is necessary in order to the greatest good; for it is impossible that God should design the greatest good, or any good at all, in suffering that to take place in his providence which is of no advantage to the universe; or, which is the same, if there is less good than there might have been, had not sin been permitted. If sin is not, by God's interposition, an advantage to the universe, but God's kingdom, taken in its whole extent, would have been much better, more happy, and glorious, if sin had not been permitted, then there could be no benevolent design in permitting it; and God is so far from carrying on designs of the greatest good in this, that less good was preferred to a greater, which is really the same thing with preferring evil to good.

And this author not only asserts as above, but he very justly observes that it is necessary we should believe that God is good in every instance of his providence, in order to acquiesce in it and exercise proper and cheerful submission. His words are these: "As a foundation of a rational acquiescence in the providence of God, we must lay this down as a principle, that we have clear and abundant proof that he is good as well as wise." According to this, we can have no reason to acquiesce in God's providence in permitting sin, any further than we have "clear and abundant proof" that he is good in permitting it. But if sin, every instance of it, does not, by God's direction and overruling hand, answer some good end, but it would have been much better on the whole if sin had not been permitted, then God exercises no goodness in the permission of sin, and, consequently, there is no ground of acquiescence in God's providence respecting this very important and most interesting affair, to which most instances of God's providence in this fallen world have some respect.

Is it not a little unaccountable that this author should stigmatize his brethren as "of confused heads and sufficiently opinionated," for asserting what is fully implied in what he himself says, and which is the only foundation, according to his own account, of all true submission to God's providence? It must be left with him to account for it and reconcile this palpable inconsistence, or, rather, retract which part of it he pleases.

Indeed, this doctrine that sin is, by God's interposition and overruling hand, an advantage to the universe, must be received, unless we call in question God's infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, or deny his universal providence, which is really the same thing. This author says, that in order to prove this, "they must first be able to tell us what would in fact have been, had all reasonable beings continued innocent." How absurd is this! How inconsistent with the subject he is upon, (the inscrutability of divine Providence,) and with most he says in other parts of his sermon! Blessed be God! we have a more safe and short way to prove this. God is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, and in the exercise of these perfections permits all the sin that takes place in his dominions; therefore, we are sure that all the sin which takes place shall answer some wise and good end, and is, on the whole, such an advantage to the universe, that there will be eternally more good than could have been had there been no evil. We may be just as sure of this as we are that God reigns infinitely blessed, omnipotent, infinitely wise and good, and that the Bible is a revelation from him.*

* Archbishop Sharp has fully asserted this doctrine in his sermon from Psalms xcvii. 1, preached before the king and queen, 1693. That the reader may see that this is no new doctrine, and that it was then supported by the same good reasons by which it is now proved, I will transcribe part of a paragraph or two from him: —

"Hence it follows, that all events whatsoever, that ever did, or do, or shall happen in the world, are really the best that could or can happen; and if

The author of a late piece, entitled "An Examination of the late Reverend President Edwards's Inquiry on Freedom of Will," has a section "on the supposed advantage of moral evil to the universe." (Part II. sec. v. p. 72.) He appears sufficiently disposed to oppose and disgrace this doctrine; but he has not offered any argument against it which does in the least confute what President Edwards published on that head, and is not fully obviated and answered in the foregoing sermons, which I think every careful, judicious reader will perceive. Why did he not particularly attend to Mr. Edwards's arguments, and point out their fallacy and weakness, instead of suggesting things in a loose, declamatory way, which have been thoroughly confuted by writers on that subject? Had he looked their arguments fairly in the face, and so much as attempted an answer, he would have been worthy of some attention; but in the room of this, he has most grossly misrepresented Mr. Edwards in two instances in this short section, (as he has done in other parts of his book,) which I think ought to be particularly noticed in justice to the truth and to Mr. Edwards. This author here says, that Mr. Edwards asserts that "moral evil is not of a bad, but good tendency," (p. 72;) whereas, Mr. Edwards has asserted no such thing, nor any thing like it. Mr. Edwards's words, from which I suppose this author took occasion to make the above assertion as a quotation from him, are these: "It is not of bad tendency for the Supreme Being thus to order and permit that moral evil to be which it is best should come to pass. For that it is of a good tendency, is the very thing supposed in the point now in question. Christ's crucifixion, though a most horrid fact in them that perpetrated it, was of the most glorious tendency, as permitted and ordered by God." (Inquiry into Freedom of Will, p. 276.) Who can help seeing that what Mr. Edwards says here is consistent with the greatest bad tendency of moral evil, in itself considered? This tendency, however strong and malignant, is counteracted and overruled by infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and thus considered in God's hands, and permitted by him, it answers good ends. In a word, it is not the tendency of sin, as such, that Mr. Edwards is here speaking of, but the tendency of God's permitting it, and holding it in his hands, and overruling it to answer his own wise and good ends by it. How this author could make the above assertion in the form of a quotation from Mr. Edwards is yet unaccountable.

He also insinuates that Mr. Edwards, in his book which he has undertaken to examine, holds, that "the happiness of the creature is the sole end of the creation." (Pp. 78, 79.) Since there is not any thing like this in Mr. Ed-

things were ordered otherwise it would not be so well. A strange paradox, you will say, this is; that not only mischief and calamities that fall upon mankind, but even their faults and mismanagements, nay, their very sins and wickednesses, should be for the best. But really so it is, and so it must be, if both infinite wisdom and goodness and power govern the world."

"Not but that a particular man's sins may be the occasion of his ruin, nay, and certainly will be so, if he persists in them. But still, though every thing that happens do not prove for the good of that particular person, or that particular people that is immediately concerned in the event, yet it will certainly prove for the general, universal good. So that, take the whole series of events together, that have or shall come to pass all the world over, we may undoubtedly affirm that all things have been as well managed as is possible they could be, and will be so to the end of the world. For, indeed, to suppose otherwise, is to say either that infinite wisdom doth not act so wisely as it might do, or that perfect goodness might do more good than it does do; or, lastly, that omnipotent power cannot do every thing that is possible. All which suppositions are plainly absurd and contradictions." — *Archbishop Sharp's Sermons*, vol. i. pp. 384, 385.

wards's whole book, and in his dissertation "Concerning the end for which God created the World," published since his death, he has asserted and labored to prove the contrary, is it not unaccountable that this author should take it in his head to make such a representation? I confess, when I read this paragraph over, and observe what artful, studied method he has taken in order to fasten such a sentiment on Mr. Edwards, and make President Clap appear inconsistent with himself, I am persuaded every discerning reader, of an honest mind, will conclude the author had good reason to conceal his name.

The longer I live, and the more I attend to the Word of God and the nature of true religion, the more I am confirmed in the belief of the truth and importance of the principal subject of the foregoing sermons, viz., that sin shall be the occasion of the greatest good; that God's perfections shall be manifested in an unspeakably more bright and glorious manner and degree; his kingdom shall be more glorious, and there shall be immensely more holiness and happiness forever, than could have been if sin had not been permitted; and that every instance of it is so far under God's direction, that it is overruled to answer some wise, good end, which could not have been so well answered any other way, and the more convinced I am that this truth is suited to support and comfort all the true friends and servants of Christ; nor can I conceive how there can be any ground of true support and consolation to them who are displeased with this doctrine, and cannot but desire their eyes may be opened to see that truth which has been the support and joy of God's people in all ages, and in which great numbers, I trust, are now rejoicing on earth and in heaven.

A DIALOGUE

CONCERNING THE

SLAVERY OF THE AFRICANS,

SHOWING IT TO BE THE

DUTY AND INTEREST OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES TO EMANCIPATE ALL THE AFRICAN SLAVES.

WITH AN

ADDRESS TO THE OWNERS OF SUCH SLAVES.

DEDICATED TO

THE HONORABLE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

"Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy." — Pr. xxxi. 9.

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." — Luke vi. 31

ADVERTISEMENT.

The first edition of the following Dialogue, written by Dr. Hopkins, was published in 1776. The second edition was published by the New York Manumission Society, established in New York, January, 1785, under the presidency of John Jay, then secretary of state for foreign affairs.

Extract from the Minutes of said Society.

"Dec. 11, 1785. *Resolved*, That the Standing Committee take order for printing two thousand copies of a pamphlet, entitled 'A Dialogue concerning the Slavery of the Africans; showing it to be the Duty and Interest of the American Colonies to emancipate all the African Slaves: with an Address to the Owners of such Slaves. Dedicated to the Honorable Continental Congress, and published at Norwich, 1776.'

"Feb. 3, 1786. *Resolved*, That each of the members of Congress, and of the senate and assembly of this state, be furnished with one of the pamphlets, entitled, 'A Dialogue on the Slavery of the Africans,' etc."

It may show something of the estimation in which Dr. Hopkins was held as a writer, and his influence as a man, as also the views of distinguished men of that day, to state further that the mayor of the city of New York, Hon. James Duane, Hon. Robert R. Livingston, then chancellor of the state of New York, and Hon. Alexander Hamilton, were active members of the society which adopted and published this Dialogue; and also that Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, was, in 1790, elected president of the society in the place of John Jay, who resigned on being appointed chief justice of the United States.

It is supposed to be owing to the influence of this Dialogue, that, in May, 1786, a petition was submitted and adopted by the society, praying the legislature of New York to prohibit the exportation of slaves. It commenced as follows: "Your memorialists, being deeply affected by the situation of those who, although *free by the laws of God*, are held in slavery by the laws of this state, view with pain and regret the additional miseries which these unhappy people experience from the practice of exporting them like cattle to the West Indies and the Southern States." This petition was drafted and headed by the president, John Jay, and also signed by Robert R. Livingston, chancellor, and Alexander Hamilton, and the clergy of the city of New York.

TO

THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS,

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED AMERICAN COLONIES.*

Much-honored Gentlemen:

As God, the great Father of the universe, has made you the fathers of these colonies, — and in answer to the prayers of his people given you counsel, and that wisdom and integrity in the exertion of which you have been such great and extensive blessings, and obtained the approbation and applause of your constituents and the respect and veneration of the nations in whose sight you have acted in the important, noble struggle for LIBERTY, — we naturally look to you in behalf of more than half a million of persons in these colonies, who are under such a degree of oppression and tyranny as to be wholly deprived of all civil and personal liberty, to which they have as good a right as any of their fellow-men, and are reduced to the most abject state of bondage and slavery without any just cause.

We have particular encouragement thus to apply to you, since you have had the honor and happiness of leading these colonies to resolve to stop the slave trade, and to buy no more slaves imported from Africa. We have the satisfaction of the best assurances that you have done this not merely from political reasons, but from a conviction of the unrighteousness and cruelty of that trade, and a regard to justice and benevolence, — deeply sensible of the inconsistence of promoting the slavery of the Africans, at the same time we are asserting our own civil liberty at the risk of our fortunes and lives. This leaves in our minds no doubt of your being sensible of the equal unrighteousness and oppression, as well as inconsistence with ourselves, in holding so many hundreds of thousands of blacks in slavery, who have an equal right to freedom with ourselves, while we are maintaining this struggle for our own and our children's liberty; and a hope and confidence that the cries and tears of these oppressed will be regarded by you, and that your wisdom and

* The reader is desired to observe that the first edition of this Dialogue was published early in the year 1776, before the declaration of our independence.

the great influence you have in these colonies will be so properly and effectually exerted as to bring about a total abolition of slavery, in such a manner as shall greatly promote the happiness of those oppressed strangers and the best interest of the public.

There are many difficulties and obstacles, we are sensible, in the way of this good work; but when the propriety, importance, and necessity of it come into view, we think ourselves warranted to address you in the words spoken to Ezra on an occasion not wholly dissimilar: "Arise, for this matter belongeth unto you; we also will be with you: be of good courage and do it."

The righteous and merciful Governor of the world has given the greatest encouragement to go on, and thoroughly execute judgment, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, both in his word, and in the wonderful things he has done for us since we have begun to reform this public iniquity. But, if we stop here, what will be the consequence?

It is observable that when the Swiss were engaged in their struggle for liberty, in which they so remarkably succeeded, they entered into the following public resolve: "No Swiss shall take away any thing by violence from another, neither in time of war nor peace." How reasonable and important is it that we should at this time heartily enter into, and thoroughly execute, such a resolution! And that this implies the emancipation of all our African slaves, surely none can doubt.

In this view the following Dialogue is humbly offered to your perusal, hoping that it may have your approbation and patronage.

May you judge the poor of the people, save the children of the needy, relieve the oppressed, and deliver the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor, and be the happy instruments of procuring and establishing universal liberty to white and black, to be transmitted down to the latest posterity.

With high esteem, and the most friendly sentiments,

We are, honorable gentlemen,

Your very humble servants,

THE EDITORS.

SLAVERY OF THE AFRICANS.

A DIALOGUE.

A. Sir, what do you think of the motion made by some among us to free all our African slaves? They say that our holding these blacks in slavery as we do is an open violation of the law of God, and is so great an instance of unrighteousness and cruelty that we cannot expect deliverance from present calamities, and success in our struggle for liberty in the American colonies, until we repent, and make all the restitution in our power. For my part, I think they carry things much too far on this head; and if any thing might be done for the freedom of our slaves, this is not a proper time to attend to it while we are in such a state of war and distress, and affairs of much greater importance demand all our attention, and the utmost exertion of the public.

B. Sir, I am glad you have introduced this subject, especially as you own a number of these slaves. I shall attend to it with pleasure, and offer my sentiments upon it freely, expecting you will as freely propose the objections you shall have against any thing I shall advance. And I take leave here to observe, that, if the slavery in which we hold the blacks is wrong, it is a very great and public sin, and, therefore, a sin which God is now testifying against in the calamities he has brought upon us; consequently, must be reformed before we can reasonably expect deliverance, or even sincerely ask for it. It would be worse than madness, then, to put off attention to this matter, under the notion of attending to more important affairs. This is acting like the mariner, who, when his ship is filling with water, neglects to stop the leak, or ply the pump, that he may mend his sails. There are, at the lowest computation, 800,000 slaves in British America, including the West India islands, and a greater part of these

are in the colonies on the continent; and if this is, in every instance, wrong, unrighteousness, and oppression, it must be a very great and crying sin, there being nothing of the kind equal to it on the face of the earth. There are but few of these slaves, indeed, in New England, compared with the vast numbers in the islands and the southern colonies; and they are treated much better on the continent, and especially among us, than they are in the West Indies. But, if it be all wrong, and real oppression of the poor, helpless blacks, we, by refusing to break this yoke and let these injured captives go free, do practically justify and support this slavery in general, and make ourselves, in a measure at least, answerable for the whole; and we have no way to exculpate ourselves from the guilt of the whole, and bear proper testimony against this great evil, but by freeing all our slaves. Surely, then, this matter admits of no delay, but demands our first and most serious attention and speedy reformation.

A. I acknowledge the slave trade, as it has been carried on with the Africans, cannot be justified; but I am not yet convinced that it is wrong to keep those in perpetual bondage who by this trade have been transported from Africa to us, and are become our slaves. If I viewed this in the light you do, I should agree with you that it is of the highest importance that they should all be made free without delay; as we could not expect the favor of Heaven, or with any consistency ask it, so long as they are held in bondage.

B. I am glad you have attended to the affair so much as to be convinced of the unrighteousness of the slave trade. Indeed, this conviction has been so spread of late that it has reached almost all men on the continent, except some of those who are too deeply interested in it to admit the light which condemns it; and it has now but few advocates, I believe, being generally condemned and exploded. And the members of the continental congress have done themselves much honor in advising the American colonies to drop this trade entirely, and resolving not to buy another slave that shall be imported from Africa.

But I think it of importance that this trade should not only be condemned as wrong, but attentively considered in its real nature, and all its shocking attendants and circumstances, which will lead us to think of it with a detestation and horror which this scene of inhumanity, oppression, and cruelty — exceeding every thing of the kind that has ever been perpetrated by the sons of men — is suited to excite; and awaken us to a proper indignation against the authors of this violence and outrage done to their fellow-men, and to feelings of

humanity and pity towards our brethren who are the miserable sufferers. Therefore, though I am not able to paint this horrid scene of barbarity and complicated iniquity to the life, or even to tell the one half which may be told in the short time allotted for this conversation, yet I will suggest a few particulars, leaving you, if you please, to consult the authors who have given a more particular description.

Most of the Africans are in a state of heathenism, and sunk down into that ignorance and barbarity into which mankind naturally fall when destitute of divine revelation. Their lands are fertile, and produce all the necessaries of life. The inhabitants are divided into many distinct nations, or clans, and, of course, are frequently entering into quarrels and open war with each other. The Europeans, English, French, and Dutch have carried on a trade with them for above one hundred years, and have taken advantage of their ignorance and barbarity to persuade them to enter into the inhuman practice of selling one another to the Europeans for the commodities which they carry to them, most of which they stand in no real need of, but might live as well or better without them, particularly spirituous liquors, which have been carried to them in great quantities by the Americans. They, by this means, have tempted and excited the poor blacks to make war upon one another in order to get captives, spreading distress, devastation, and destruction over a vast country, by which many millions have perished, and millions of others have been captivated and sold to the Europeans and Americans into a state of slavery much worse than death. And the inhabitants of the towns near the sea are taught to exert all the art and power they have to entrap and decoy one another, that they may make slaves of them, and sell them to us for rum; by which they intoxicate themselves, and become more brutish and savage than otherwise they could be, so that there are but few instances of sobriety, honesty, or even humanity, in these towns on the sea to which the Europeans have access, and they who live the farthest from these places are the least vicious, and much more civil and humane.

They stand in no need of the rum that is carried there in such quantities, by which so many thousands have been enslaved, and which has spread such infinite mischief among them; and I leave it with you to consider to what a dreadful degree the Americans have, by this abominable practice, brought the curse upon them pronounced by an inspired prophet, and how very applicable it is to this case. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest

look on their nakedness!" (Hab. ii. 15.) And is not this curse evidently come upon us in a dreadful degree, in such a way as to paint itself out, so that he who runs may read it? We have put the bottle to our neighbors' mouths, by carrying immense quantities of rum to them, and enticed them to drink, that we might take advantage of their weakness, and thereby gratify our lusts. By this means multitudes of them have been enslaved and carried to the West India islands, there to be kept to hard labor, and treated ten thousand times worse than dogs. In consequence of which, incredible quantities of rum, and molasses which has been distilled into rum among ourselves, have been imported, the most of which is consumed in intemperance and drunkenness, in such a dreadful degree as to exceed any thing of the kind in any part of the world; by which thousands, yea, millions, have ruined themselves, body and soul, forever. Let any one consider this, and forbear to confess, if he can, that this woe has fallen heavily upon us, and that in such a way and connection as to point out the sinful cause.

But to return. This trade has been carried on for a century and more, and for many years past above a hundred thousand have been brought off the coast in a year, so that many, many millions have been torn from their native country, their acquaintance, relations and friends, and most of them put into a state of slavery, both themselves and their children forever, if they shall have any posterity, much worse than death. When numbers of these wretched creatures are collected by the savages, they are brought into the public market to be sold, all naked as they were born. The more than savage slave merchant views them, and sends his surgeon more particularly to examine them as to the soundness of their limbs, their age, &c. All that are passed as fit for sale are branded with a hot iron in some part of their body with the buyer's mark, and then confined, crowded together in some close hold, till a convenient time to put them on board a ship. When they are brought on board, all are immediately put in irons, except some of the women perhaps, and the small children, where they are so crowded together in that hot climate, that commonly a considerable number die on their passage to the West Indies, occasioned partly by their confinement, partly by the grief and vexation of their minds from the treatment they receive, and the situation in which they find themselves. And a number commonly die after they arrive at the West Indies in seasoning to the climate, so that, commonly, not above seventy in a hundred survive their transportation; by which means about thirty thousand are murdered every year by this

slave trade, which amounts to three millions in a century. When they are brought to the West Indies, they are again exposed to market, as if they were so many beasts, and sold to the highest bidder; where again they are separated according to the humor of the traders, without any regard to their friendships or relations, of husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, &c.; being torn from each other, without the least regard to any thing of this kind, and sent to different places, without any prospect of seeing each other again. They are then put under a taskmaster by the purchasing planter, who appoints them their work and rules over them with rigor and cruelty, following them with his cruel whip, or appointing one to do it, if possible more cruel than himself. The infirm and feeble, the females, and even those who are pregnant, or have infants to take care of, must do their task in the field equally with the rest; or if they fall behind, may be sure to feel the lash of their unmerciful driver. Their allowance of food at the same time is very coarse and scant, and must be cooked by themselves, if cooked at all, when they want to be asleep. And often they have no food but what they procure for themselves, by working on the Sabbath; for that is the only time they have to themselves. And to make any complaint or petition for relief will expose them to some severe punishment, if not a cruel death. The least real or supposable crimes in them are punished in the most cruel manner. And they have no relief, there being no appeal from their masters' sentence and will, who commonly are more like savage beasts than rational, human creatures. And to petition for liberty, though in the most humble and modest terms, is as much as their lives are worth, as few escape the most cruel death who presume to hint any thing of this kind to their masters; it being a maxim with those more than cruel tyrants, that the only way to keep them under, and prevent their thinking of the sweets of liberty, is to punish the least intimation of it in the severest manner, as the most intolerable affront and insult on their masters. Their labor is so hard, and their diet so scant and poor, and they are treated in all respects with such oppression and cruelty, that they do not increase by propagation in the islands, but constantly decrease, so that every planter must every year purchase five at least to every hundred he has on his plantation, in order to keep his number from diminishing.

But it is in vain to attempt a full description of the oppression and cruel treatment these poor creatures receive constantly at the hands of their imperious, unmerciful, worse than Egyptian taskmasters. Words cannot utter it. Volumes might

be written, and not give a detail of a thousandth part of the shockingly cruel things they have suffered, and are constanly suffering. Nor can they possibly be conceived of by any one who has not been an eye witness. And how little a part does he see! They who are witnesses to any part of this horrid scene of barbarous oppression cannot but feel the truth and propriety of Solomon's words: "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of the oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive." (Ec. iv. 1, 2.) Solomon never saw any oppression like this, unless he looked forward to this very instance in the spirit of prophecy.

A. Sir, there is one important circumstance in favor of the slave trade, or which will at least serve to counterbalance many of the evils you mention, and that is, we bring these slaves from a heathen land to places of gospel light, and so put them under special advantages to be saved.

B. I know this has been mentioned by many in favor of the slave trade; but when examined, will turn greatly against it. It can hardly be said with truth, that the West India islands are places of gospel light. But if they were, are the negroes in the least benefited by it? Have they any access to the gospel? Have they any instruction more than if they were beasts? So far from this, that their masters guard against their having any instruction to their utmost; and if any one would attempt any such thing, it would be at the risk of his life. And all the poor creatures learn of Christianity from what they see in those who call themselves Christians, only serves to prejudice them in the highest degree against the Christian religion. For they not only see the abominably wicked lives of most of those who are called Christians, but are constantly oppressed by them, and receive as cruel treatment from them as they could from the worst of beings. And as to those who are brought to the continent, in the southern colonies,* and even to New England, so little pains are taken to instruct them, and there is so much to prejudice them against Christianity, that it is a very great wonder and owing to an extraordinary divine interposition, in which we may say

* It can be proved that, since the war begun, a proposal was made to send some blacks who were qualified to teach Christianity into the southern colonies to teach the blacks there, and attempt to Christianize them; but the gentlemen who were better acquainted with the disposition of slaveholders in those parts discouraged the design, and said the masters of the blacks in general would not suffer any such thing.

God goes out of his common way, that any of them should think favorably of Christianity and cordially embrace it. As to the most of them, no wonder they are unteachable and get no good by the gospel, but they have imbibed the deepest prejudices against it from the treatment they receive from professed Christians; prejudices which most of them are by their circumstances restrained from expressing, while they are fixed in the strongest degree in their minds.

But if this was not the case, and all the slaves brought from Africa were put under the best advantages to become Christians, and they were in circumstances that tended to give them the most favorable idea of Christians and the religion they profess,* and though all concerned in this trade, and in slavery in general, should have this wholly in view, viz., their becoming Christians, by which they should be eternally happy, yet this would not justify the slave trade, or continuing them in a state of slavery; for, to take this method to Christianize them would be a direct and gross violation of the laws of Christ. He commands us to go and preach the gospel to all nations, to carry the gospel to them, and not to go and with violence bring them from their native country without saying a word to them, or to the nations from whom they are taken, about the gospel or any thing that relates to it.

If the Europeans and Americans had been as much engaged to Christianize the Africans as they have been to enslave them, and had been at half the cost and pains to introduce the gospel among them that they have to captivate and destroy them, we have all the reason in the world to conclude that extensive country, containing such a vast multitude of inhabitants, would have been full of gospel light, and the many nations there civilized and made happy, and a foundation laid for the salvation of millions of millions, and the happy instruments of it have been rewarded ten thousand fold for all their labor and expense. But now, instead of this, what has been done on that coast by those who pass among the negroes for Christians,† has only served to produce and spread the greatest and most deep-rooted prejudices against the Christian religion, and bar the way to that which is above all things desirable — their coming to the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved. So that, while by the murder-

* Which cannot be the case so long as they are held in a state of slavery, or they are brought away from their native country in the manner they are; so that the supposition is inconsistent, and destroys itself.

† For they have no way to get an idea of a Christian but from the apppearance and conduct of the Europeans or Americans, in the practice of all their unrighteousness, cruelty, profaneness, and debauchery.

ing or enslaving millions of millions they have brought a curse upon themselves and on all that partake with them, they have injured in the highest degree innumerable nations, and done what they could to prevent their salvation and to fasten them down in ignorance and barbarity to the latest posterity. Who can realize all this and not feel a mixture of grief, pity, indignation, and horror, truly ineffable? And must he not be filled with zeal to do his utmost to put a speedy stop to this seven-headed monster of iniquity, with all the horrid train of evils with which it is attended?

And can any one consider all these things, and yet pretend to justify the slave trade, or the slavery of the Africans in America? Is it not impossible that a real Christian who has attended to all this should have any hand in this trade? And it requires the utmost stretch of charity to suppose that any one ever did or can buy or sell an African slave with a sincere view to make a true Christian of him.*

* It has been often said in vindication of the slave trade, that the blacks are so cruel to each other that they would put their captives to death if they could not sell them, so that they who buy them save their lives and do them the greatest kindness. And, at the same time, this trade is of the greatest advantage to the West India islands and the Southern States, and to all in connection with them, for white men cannot do the business which is done by the blacks in those hot climates, so that, were not the blacks introduced and improved, all this labor, and the produce of it, must cease.

Answer. These suggestions may be a sufficient vindication of the slave trade with the interested and inattentive, but the impartial and judicious will see with how little reason and truth they are urged, when they have attended to the following observations: —

There is no evidence that those people did kill their captives, in general, which they took in war, but the contrary is evident from the account given of them by those Europeans who have travelled and lived longest among them. They represent those nations which have not been corrupted by the whites to be, in general, industrious, friendly, and hospitable, and, in a great measure, happy in the enjoyment of society and the comforts of life. (See "*A short Account of that part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes*," printed at Philadelphia, 1762.) And there is abundant evidence from history, and testimonies incontestable, that these nations have been encouraged and induced to carry on most of their wars, for more than a century past, by the Europeans and Americans, that they might get captives to sell to traders in the souls and bodies of men; and where this trade has been the means of saving one life, it has destroyed millions. Therefore, if professing Christians, instead of encouraging them in their cruelty, and tempting them to destroy, captivate, and sell each other, had taken as much pains to teach them humanity and benevolence as they have to reduce millions to a state of slavery worse than death, they might have saved as many lives as now they have been the means of destroying.

Besides, the cruelty of those savages to each other is no warrant to the slave trader to buy those supposed victims, and put them into a state of slavery which, by their own confession, is worse than death. This, surely, is not an act of mercy, but of cruelty. The voice of mercy and humanity is against selling them as slaves. Who does not know that "one who was the means of preserving a man's life, is not, therefore, entitled to make him a slave, and sell him as he does a piece of goods"?

As to other suggestions, viz., that the blacks are necessary to cultivate the

A. All this seems to be little to the purpose, since it was granted, in the beginning of our conversation, that the slave trade, as it has been carried on, is not to be justified. But what is this to the question we proposed to consider, which is, whether it be wrong to hold the blacks we have among us in a state of slavery, or ought to set them free without delay. To this you have said little or nothing as yet.

B. All I have said upon the slave trade to show the unrighteousness, the cruelty, the murder, the opposition to Christianity and the spread of the gospel among the Africans, the destruction of whole nations and myriads of souls which are contained in this horrid practice, has been principally with a view to a more clear and satisfactory determination of the question before us, which you have now renewedly proposed, for I think the following proposition may be advanced as un-

lands in those hot climates, since the whites are not able to labor there, it may be observed, that there is not the least evidence of this, but much of the contrary. Whites are healthy, and do the labor in the East Indies which blacks do in the West, in the same climate, and that to much greater advantage, of which authentic accounts have been published. The truth is, most of the whites which are born in the Southern States, or the West Indies, are not educated to labor, but great part of them in idleness and intemperance. The blacks are introduced to do the work, and it is thought a disgrace for a white person to get his living by labor. By this means, the whites in general are vicious, and all imbibe such a haughty and tyrannical spirit by holding so many slaves, that they are above labor, and many of them rather a plague than a blessing to all about them. And whole families are ruined forever by means of this slavery. Whereas, if African slaves had never been introduced, or this slavery were now abolished, and every man had his farm or plantation, — no more than he could cultivate to the best advantage by the help of his children and perhaps a few hired men, — this would introduce industry, temperance, and economy, the land would produce much more than it does now, and the country be filled with industrious, virtuous inhabitants, happy themselves, and blessings to all around them, instead of the comparatively few families now, many of which are a burden to the earth, and a disgrace to human nature. This brings the words of Solomon fresh to mind: "There is a time when one man ruleth over another to his own hurt." (Ec. viii. 9.)

We cannot hesitate to say, this sage observation is verified in the most striking manner, and to the highest degree, in the slavery under consideration. It is an unspeakable hurt to the public, to the commonwealth. If it is inconsistent with republican principles, and tends to overthrow the liberties of those states, and introduce monarchy and tyranny, to have such slavery tolerated among us, and so many petty sovereigns and lords ruling over a number of vassals with despotic sway, their children naturally imbibe those arbitrary principles and grow up as unfit to be useful members of those free, republican states, as do the children of the most haughty monarch on the globe. And those men rule over themselves to their own hurt, and the hurt, the misery, and ruin of their families, temporal and *eternal*. But if it should still be thought by any, or it be in fact true, that those climates cannot be cultivated by whites, let it be remembered that this is no justification of the horrid slave trade and slavery now practised, but it is a good reason why the whites should abandon the places where they cannot live unless it be on the blood of others as good as themselves, and renounce the business which is carried on in the exercise of so much unrighteousness and cruelty. If the blacks only can labor there, the lands are theirs by right, and they ought to be allowed to possess them as freemen, and enjoy the fruit of their labor.

deniable, viz., if the slave trade be unjustifiable and wrong, then our holding the Africans and their children in bondage is unjustifiable and wrong, and the latter is criminal in some proportion to the inexpressible baseness and criminality of the former. For, —

First. If they have been brought into a state of slavery by unrighteousness and violence, they having never forfeited their liberty or given any one a right to enslave and sell them, then purchasing them of these piratical tyrants, and holding them in the same state of bondage into which they, contrary to all right, have brought them, is continuing the exercise of the same unrighteousness and violence towards them. They have yet as much a right to their liberty as ever they had, and to demand it of him who holds them in bondage; and he denies them their right, which is of more worth to them than every thing else they can have in the world, or all the riches the unjust master does or can possess, and therefore injures them in a very high degree every hour he refuses or neglects to set them at liberty. Besides, —

Secondly. Holding these blacks in a state of slavery is a practical justification of the slave trade, and so brings the guilt of that on the head of him who so far partakes in this iniquity as to hold one of these a slave who was unrighteously made so by these sons of violence. The old adage, "the partaker is as bad as the thief," carries such a plain truth in it that every one must discern it, and it is certainly applicable to this case.

It is impossible to buy one of these blacks and detain him a slave, without partaking with him who first reduced him to this state and put it in his power thus to possess him, and practically justifying him for so doing, so as to bring upon himself the guilt of first enslaving him. It is not, therefore, possible for any of our slavekeepers to justify themselves in what they are doing, unless they can justify the slave trade. If they fail here, they bring on themselves an awful degree of the guilt of the whole.

Thirdly. By keeping these slaves, and buying and selling them, they actually encourage and promote the slave trade; and therefore, in this view, keeping slaves and continuing to buy and sell them is to bring on us the guilt of the slave trade, which is hereby supported. For so long as slaves are bought and possessed, and in demand, so long the African trade will be supported and encouraged.

A. But there is a stop put to the importation of slaves into the American colonies, as they have resolved no more shall be bought. This being the case, the keeping those we have among us in slavery is no encouragement to the slave trade.

B. I grant, if this resolution should be perpetual, and extend to the West Indies, it would discourage the slave trade so far as the Americans are concerned in it, but it would be more effectually discountenanced and condemned if slavery was wholly abolished, and it cannot be consistently done without this. For, if it be wrong to import and buy them now, it was always wrong, and, therefore, they that are already slaves among us are injured, and unjustly enslaved, and we have made them our slaves without the least right, and ought to retract it and repair the injury done to them, so far as is in our power, by setting them free and compensating them otherwise so far as we are able. There is, therefore, a palpable inconsistency in resolving to import and buy no more slaves and yet refusing to let those go out free which we have already enslaved, unless there be some insuperable impediment in the way.

The whole I have said concerning the unlawfulness of keeping the blacks in slavery, if the trade by which they are become our slaves be unlawful, may be illustrated by the following example:—

A number of robbers invaded a certain province, and took off most of their goods and effects, and carried them to a neighboring province and sold them to the inhabitants, and the robbers finding this encouragement, continued the practice for many years. At length the people of the injured province applied to their neighbors, who had their goods of the robbers, and were now in possession of them, and asked them to restore what was taken from them by violence, and to which they had a good and indisputable right, it being impossible these robbers could give a right to what they had unjustly taken from them; but the people, in whose possession the stolen goods were found, utterly refused to deliver them up to the injured people who demanded them. They told them they had indeed been greatly injured, and they must condemn the robbers as very injurious and cruel in what they had done, but as they now had these goods in their own possession, they intended to keep them, and looked on themselves under no obligation to deliver them up, though they suffered so much and would probably perish for want of them; and they intended still to buy all the robbers should bring to them.

To this the injured replied, "By partaking with these robbers in receiving the goods at their hands, you practically justify their conduct, and must share with them in their guilt. For by this means you encourage them, and are determined to go on to encourage them in this violence and rapine; and by condemning them, you equally condemn yourselves, and

must remain under this condemnation till you restore the goods we demand, and resolve never to purchase any thus taken from us by violence."

Upon this they determined to purchase no more of them, but refused to deliver up what they had already got in possession. But the oppressed told them, they did right in resolving to injure them no more in that way; but they were now very inconsistent with themselves, for if it were wrong to purchase any more, it was as wrong to withhold what they had already gotten in possession; and they had no other way to justify themselves in detaining their goods, and to be consistent, but by proceeding to take whatever those robbers should bring to them in future, and justifying themselves in so doing and the robbers in all their depredations.

A. This reasoning looks something plausible, I confess; but the Holy Scripture approves of making and keeping slaves, and this surely is sufficient to keep us in countenance.

B. I hope you will not appeal to the Holy Scripture in support of a practice which you and every one else must allow to be so inexpressibly unjust, inhuman, and cruel, as is the slave trade, and, consequently, so glaringly contrary to the whole tenor of divine revelation; and if the slave trade is such a gross violation of every divine precept, it is impossible to vindicate the slavery to which the Africans have been reduced by this trade from the Holy Scripture. Of this we have such a certainty, *a priori*, that would be a horrid reproach of divine revelation to pretend this practice can be supported by that, or even to look into it with any hope or expectation of finding any thing there in favor of it; and if there be any passages in the Bible which are capable of a construction in favor of this practice, we may be very certain it is a wrong one. In a word, if any kind of slavery can be vindicated by the Holy Scriptures, we are already sure our making and holding the negroes our slaves, as we do, cannot be vindicated by any thing we can find there, but is condemned by the whole of divine revelation. However, I am willing to hear what you can produce from Scripture in favor of any kind of slavery.

A. You know that a curse was pronounced on the posterity of Ham for his wickedness, in the following words: "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." He could not be a servant unto his brethren unless they made him so, or at least held him in servitude. The curse could not take place unless they executed it, and they seem to be by God appointed to do this; therefore, while we, the children of Japheth, are making such abject slaves of the blacks, the children of Ham, we are only executing the righteous curse denounced upon

them; which is so far from being wrong in us, that it would be a sin, even disobedience to the revealed will of God, to refuse to make slaves of them, and attempt to set them at liberty.

B. Do you think, my good sir, it was the duty of Pharaoh to make the Israelites serve him and the Egyptians, and to afflict them by ruling over them with rigor, and holding them in hard and cruel bondage, because God had expressly foretold this, and said it should be done? And was the Assyrian king blameless while he executed the judgments which God had threatened to inflict on his professing people? Did God's threatening them with those evils warrant this king to distress, captivate, and destroy them as he did? And will you say the Jews did right in crucifying our Lord, because by this they fulfilled the Scriptures, declaring that thus it must be? Your argument, if it is of any force, will assert and justify all this, and, therefore, I hope will be renounced by you, and by all who have the least regard for the Holy Scripture, with proper abhorrence.

But, if this argument were not so fraught with absurdity and impiety as it really is, and it were granted to be forcible with respect to all upon whom the mentioned curse was denounced, yet it would not justify our enslaving the Africans, for they are not the posterity of Canaan, who was the only son of Ham that was doomed to be a servant of servants. The other sons of Ham and their posterity are no more affected with this curse than the other sons of Noah and their posterity. Therefore, this prediction is as much of a warrant for the Africans' enslaving us, as it is for us to make slaves of them. The truth is, it gives not the least shadow of a right to any one of the children of Noah to make slaves of any of their brethren.*

A. The people of Israel were allowed by God to buy and make slaves from the nations that were round about them, and the strangers that lived among them, — which could not have been the case if this was wrong and unjust, — and why have not we an equal right to do the same?

B. And why have not we an equal right to invade any nation and land, as they did the land of Canaan, and destroy

* If it should be asked, "Why should Canaan be singled out from the other sons of Ham, and cursed for the sins of his father? May we not conclude that the curse fell on all Ham's posterity, and that Canaan only is mentioned as including all the rest?" — it must be answered, No, by no means; we have no warrant to do this. The father sinned, and God might justly have cursed all his posterity; but, in his wisdom and sovereign goodness, he cursed only one branch of the family; and how effectually this has taken place the Scripture informs us.

them all, men, women, and children, and beasts, without saving so much as one alive? It was right for the Israelites to do this, because they had a divine permission and direction to do it, as the God of Israel had a right to destroy the seven nations of Canaan in what way he thought best, and to direct whom he pleased to do it. And it was right for them to make bond-servants of the nations round them, they having an express permission to do it from him who has a right to dispose of all men as he pleases. God saw fit, for wise reasons, to allow the people of Israel thus to make and possess slaves; but is this any license to *us* to enslave any of our fellow-men, any more than their being allowed to kill the seven nations in Canaan is a warrant to us to kill any of our fellow-men whom we please and are able to destroy, and take possession of their estates? This must be answered in the negative by every one who will allow himself a moment's reflection. God gave many directions and laws to the Jews which had no respect to mankind in general; and this under consideration has all the marks of such a one. There is not any thing in it, or relating to it, from whence can be deduced the least evidence that it was designed to be a regulation for all nations through every age of the world, but every thing to the contrary. The children of Israel were then distinguished from all other nations on earth; they were God's peculiar people, and favored on many accounts above others, and had many things in their constitution and laws that were designed to keep up their separation and distinction from other nations, and to make the special favor of Heaven towards them more apparent to all who had any knowledge of them; and this law respecting bondage is suited to answer these ends. This distinction is now at an end, and all nations are put upon a level; and Christ, who has taken down the wall of separation, has taught us to look on all nations as our neighbors and brethren, without any respect of persons, and to love all men as ourselves, and to do to others as we would they should treat us; by which he has most effectually abolished this permission given to the Jews, as well as many other institutions which were peculiar to them.

Besides, that this permission was not designed for all nations and ages will be very evident if we consider what such a supposition implies; for if this be so, then all other nations had a right to make slaves of the Jews. The Egyptians had a right to buy and sell them, and keep them all in bondage forever, and the nations round about Canaan had a right to bring them into bondage, as they sometimes did, and the Babylonians and Romans had a good warrant to reduce them to a

state of captivity and servitude. And the Africans have a good right to make slaves of us and our children; the inhabitants of Great Britain may lawfully make slaves of all the Americans, and transport us to England, and buy and sell us in open market as they do their cattle and horses, and perpetuate our bondage to the latest generation; and the Turks have a good right to all the Christian slaves they have among them, and to make as many more slaves of us and our children as shall be in their power, and to hold them and their children in bondage to the latest posterity. According to this, every man has a warrant to make a bondslave of his neighbor whenever it lies in his power, and no one has any right to his own freedom any longer than he can keep himself out of the power of others. For instance: if the blacks now among us should, by some remarkable providence, have the power in their hands to reduce us, they have a right to make us and our children their slaves, and we should have no reason to complain.

This would put mankind into such a state of perpetual war and confusion, and is so contrary to our loving our neighbor as ourselves, that he who has the least regard for his fellowmen, or the divine law, must reject it, and the principle from which it flows, with the greatest abhorrence. Let no Christian, then, plead this permission to the Jews, to make bondslaves of their neighbors, as a warrant to hold the slaves he has made, and, consequently, for universal slavery.

A. But what will you do with those passages in the New Testament which are in favor of slavery, and suppose Christian masters to have Christian slaves, — and the masters are so far from being directed to free them that it is supposed they may hold them in bondage, — and their mutual duties in this relation are inculcated? Paul, the apostle, is so far from being disposed to have servants made free, that he says, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor." (1 Tim. vi. 1.) And in the following words supposes that believing masters had servants, whom he exhorts to serve such masters with the more cheerfulness, out of respect to their Christian character.

B. Before I make a direct answer to this I beg leave to remind you, that, whatever other kind of slavery these passages will vindicate, they certainly will not support the slave trade, and that slavery of the negroes into which they have been brought by this trade, which is manifestly unrighteous from beginning to end; and, therefore, can be nothing to our present purpose, viz., to justify Christian masters among us in holding the blacks and their children in bondage.

I grant there are bondservants who are made so, and may be held in this state, consistent with justice, humanity, and benevolence. They are such, who have forfeited their liberty to the community of which they are members, by some particular crimes, and by debt in some instances; and are for this condemned to servitude for a longer or shorter time, and sold by the civil magistrate. And persons may put themselves into this state by their own voluntary act. There were doubtless such in the apostle's days; and if master and servant, in this case, were converted to Christianity, the servant would still be under the yoke, and the apostle's exhortation highly proper. Therefore if every master, when he embraced Christianity, was obliged to free all his servants who had not evidently forfeited their liberty, and not one who refused to do this was admitted into a Christian church, yet there might be many masters and servants in the first Christian churches; and the passages of Scripture under consideration prove no more than this, and therefore will not justify any master holding one servant in bondage against his will, so much as an hour, who has not evidently brought himself into this state by his own crimes, and been adjudged to it, after proper trial, by the civil magistrate. These Scriptures, therefore, are infinitely far from justifying the slavery under consideration; for it cannot be made to appear that one in a thousand of these slaves has done any thing to forfeit his own liberty. And if there were any such, they have never been condemned to slavery by any who are proper judges, or had any authority to act in the affair. But if this were the case of any, they certainly could not forfeit the liberty of their children, and cause them to be born slaves.

But it may be further observed, that it might be difficult in many cases at that day to determine what servants were justly in a state of bondage, and who had a right to their liberty, (which is not the case with respect to the slaves whose cause I am now pleading.) And the apostles did not think it their business to examine into every instance of slavery, and find the original ground of it, in order to determine whether the servant ought to be set free or not; and as it was taken for granted by all, or most, that the slavery which then took place was generally just, and if every one who embraced Christianity and had slaves must undergo a strict examination, and be obliged to dismiss his servants unless he could produce good evidence that they had forfeited their liberty, this, as circumstances then were, would have greatly prejudiced the world against the Christian religion and tended to retard its propagation; I say, considering all these things, the apostles might

be directed not to intermeddle in this affair so far as to inquire into every instance of slavery, whether it was just or not; but to treat it as if it were so, unless there were particular, positive evidence of the contrary in any instances; only giving general rules for the direction and conduct of masters and servants, which, if applied and put into practice, would not only render this relation comfortable where it ought to subsist, but would effect the liberty of all the servants who were evidently reduced to that state unjustly, and were suited to put an end to slavery in general. Thus the apostle Paul, speaking to masters, says, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal." (Col. iv. 1.) The master who conformed to this rule must not only treat his servants with equity in all instances, but must set at liberty all who were evidently unjustly enslaved, and therefore had a right to their freedom. And if any Christian master refused to do this, he would bring upon him the censure of the church for disregarding this apostolic rule. (2 Thess. iii. 6.) And the same apostle says to the servant, "If thou mayest be made free, use it rather." (1 Cor. vii. 21.) In these words it is declared that slavery is, in itself considered, undesirable, and a calamity in every instance of it, and therefore that it ought to be avoided and abolished as far as possible. And not only the servant is warranted and commanded to desire and seek to be made free, but the master is also implicitly required to set him at liberty, if there be no insuperable impediment in the way; for if the servant ought to desire and attempt to obtain his freedom, the master ought to desire it also, and assist him to obtain it if it can be effected, and will do it if he loves his servant as himself; and the church to which the servant belongs, and every member of it, ought to do all in their power to procure the freedom of every such servant; for will any one say they ought not to do their utmost in assisting their poor suffering brother to obtain his liberty, which God has commanded him to desire and seek? This apostolic command, therefore, being properly regarded, would soon put an end to most instances of slavery in the Christian church, if it did not wholly abolish it, especially at this day, when many of the impediments in the way of freeing slaves, which were in the apostles' days, are removed. And it may be left to the consciences of all slaveholders among us, whether, if it had been left to them, such a direction and command would ever have been given to any servant whatever, as is here given by the apostle; and whether, now it is given, they approve of it and practice accordingly. So far from it, that most of them, even professing Christians, hold their servants at such a distance, and treat them in such a manner,

that the poor servant dare not so much as treat with his master about his freedom, and if he should say a word, is pretty sure to receive nothing but angry frowns, if not blows. And if any one undertakes to plead the cause of these oppressed poor, whose right is turned aside in the gate and they have no helper, he may expect to feel the resentment of almost every keeper of slaves who knows him. And is there one church now in this land who are ready to do what is in their power to obtain the freedom of the slaves which belong to them, or are willing calmly to consider and debate the question among themselves, whether it be right to hold the negroes in bondage? Where is the church that has done any thing of this kind? * And how few churches are to be found that would not be greatly disturbed and filled with resentment if the question were seriously proposed and urged to be considered?

Let none who are conscious all this is true urge the apostle Paul's authority in favor of the slave-keeping which is practised in British America.

But to return. The apostle seems to have conducted in this case as he did in that of civil government. He considered this as a divine institution, and pointed out the end and design of it, and the duty of civil rulers and of the subject, without particularly applying it to the government Christians were then under, so as expressly to justify or condemn the particular form of government that then took place, or the conduct of those who then had the civil authority in their hands, and that for very obvious reasons, grounded on the state and circumstances of the church and of public affairs at that day. We may as well infer from this that the civil governors of that day were not unjust and tyrannical, which is most contrary to known fact, as we can that the slavery which then took place was in general just and right, from his pointing out the duties of masters and servants without mentioning and condemning any particular instances of unjust slavery.

A. You well observed that the apostles did not intermeddle with the affair of slavery so as to condemn masters for holding their slaves, or tell the servants their masters had no right to keep them in bondage, but ought to free them. I wish all were as wise and prudent now, especially ministers of the

* Since the first edition of this dialogue, a number of churches in New England have purged themselves from this iniquity, and determined not to tolerate the holding of the Africans in slavery. If all the churches in these United States would come into the same measure, and imitate the Friends, called Quakers, in this article, would they not act more like Christian churches than they now do?

gospel; but all are not so. Many make such a clamor about holding our negroes in bondage, and some ministers have of late said so much in public about freeing our slaves, and have so inveighed against the African slave trade, and even keeping our blacks in slavery, that many of the negroes are become very uneasy, and are much more engaged to obtain their liberty than they used to be.

I think if any thing be said on this subject it should be in private; and not a word of this kind should be lisped in the hearing of our servants, much less ought ministers to say any thing about it in public, lest the blacks should all take it into their heads that they are treated hardly, and never be easy till they are set at liberty.

B. It has been observed, there were reasons peculiar to the state of things at that time, why the apostles should not be so particular on this head; which reasons do not take place now. The slavery that now takes place is in a Christian land, and without the express sanction of civil government; and it is all of the same kind and from one original, which is most notoriously unjust, and if it be unrighteous in one instance, it is so in almost every instance; and the unrighteousness of it is most apparent, and most masters have no color of claim to hold their servants in bondage; and this is become a general and crying sin, for which we are under the awful frowns of Heaven. These things, which make the case so different from the slavery which took place in the apostles' days, may be a good reason of a different conduct, and make it duty to oppose and bear testimony, both in public and more privately, against this evil practice, which is so evidently injurious to individuals, and threatens our ruin as a people.

As to making servants uneasy, and desirous of liberty, I would observe, that most of them do not want to be informed that they are greatly injured and oppressed; that they are reduced to a state of slavery without the least color of justice. They have sense and discerning enough to be sensible of this, without being told; and they think much of it almost every day, though they are obliged to keep it to themselves, having none to pity them, or so much as hear their complaints. They have a thousand times more discerning and sensibility in this case than their masters, or most others; and their aversion to slavery, and desires of liberty, are inextinguishable. Therefore, their hearing it asserted that they ought to be set at liberty gives them no new light and conviction, except it be, that he who asserts it has some discerning of what they have long known and most sensibly felt, and has courage enough to assert that in their favor which they have long felt the truth

of, but dared not so much as lisp it out. But if by this means any of your servants should be more fully convinced of their right to liberty, and the injustice done them in making them slaves, will this be such a dreadful evil? Would you desire they should be held in ignorance, that you may exercise your tyranny without opposition or trouble from any quarter? As reasonably might Pharaoh be angry, and complain of Moses and Aaron for saying a word to those whom he had reduced to slavery about their cruel bondage and their obtaining their liberty.

It has always been the way of tyrants to take great pains to keep their vassals in ignorance, especially to hide from them the tyranny and oppression of which they are the subjects; and for this reason they are enemies to the liberty of the press, and are greatly provoked when their conduct is set in a true light before the public, and the unrighteousness they practise properly exposed. The complaint we are now considering seems to be of the same kind with this, and well becomes all those petty tyrants who have slaves in their possession, which they are conscious they cannot vindicate, but the unrighteousness will be detected if free inquiry and freedom of speech cannot be suppressed; and this complaint is of the same kind with the conduct of the masters of slaves in the West Indies in opposing their being taught any thing of Christianity, because they know every gleam of this light carries a discovery of the unrighteousness of the treatment they receive.

The present situation of our public affairs and our struggle for liberty, and the abundant conversation this occasions in all companies, while the poor negroes look on and hear what an aversion we have to slavery and how much liberty is prized, they often hearing it declared publicly and in private, as the voice of all, that slavery is more to be dreaded than death, and we are resolved to live free or die, etc.; this, I say, necessarily leads them to attend to their own wretched situation more than otherwise they could. They see themselves deprived of all liberty and property, and their children after them, to the latest posterity, subject to the will of those who appear to have no feeling for their misery, and are guilty of many instances of hard-heartedness and cruelty towards them, while they think themselves very kind; and therefore, to make the least complaint, would be deemed the height of arrogance and abuse; and often if they have a comparatively good master now, with constant dread they see a young one growing up, who bids fair to rule over them, or their children, with rigor.

They see the slavery the Americans dread as worse than death is lighter than a feather compared to their heavy doom,

and may be called liberty and happiness when contrasted with the most abject slavery and unutterable wretchedness to which they are subjected; and in this dark and dreadful situation they look round and find no help — no pity — no hope! And when they observe all this cry and struggle for liberty for ourselves and children, and see themselves and their children wholly overlooked by us, and behold the sons of liberty oppressing and tyrannizing over many thousands of poor blacks who have as good a claim to liberty as themselves, they are shocked with the glaring inconsistence, and wonder they themselves do not see it. You must not, therefore, lay it to the few who are pleading the cause of these friendless, distressed poor, that they are more uneasy than they used to be in a sense of their wretched state and from a desire of liberty: there is a more mighty and irresistible cause than this, viz., all that passes before them in our public struggle for liberty.

And why should the ministers of the gospel hold their peace and not testify against this great and public iniquity, which we have reason to think is one great cause of the public calamities we are now under? How can they refuse to plead the cause of these oppressed poor against the cruel oppressor? They are commanded to lift up their voice, and cry aloud, and show the people their sins. Have we not reason to fear many of them have offended Heaven by their silence, through fear of the masters, who stand ready to make war against any one who attempts to deprive them of their slaves, or because they themselves have slaves which they are not willing to give up?

Might they not fully expose this iniquity, and bear a constant testimony against it, in such a manner as would have no tendency to influence our servants to behave ill in any respect, by giving them, at the same time, proper cautions and directions?

A. It is impossible to free all our negroes, especially at once and in present circumstances, without injuring them, at least many of them, and the public to a great degree. Why, then, is this urged so vehemently now? I think this proceeds from a zeal not according to knowledge.

B. If it be not a sin, an open, flagrant violation of all the rules of justice and humanity, to hold these slaves in bondage, it is indeed folly to put ourselves to any trouble and expense in order to free them. But if the contrary be true, if it be a sin of a crimson dye, which is most particularly pointed out by the public calamities which have come upon us, from which we have no reason to expect deliverance till we put away the evil of our doings, this reformation cannot be urged with too

much zeal, nor attempted too soon, whatever difficulties are in the way. The more and greater these are, the more zealous and active should we be in removing them. You had need to take care, lest from selfish motives and a backwardness to give up what you unrighteously retain, you are joining with the slothful man to cry, "There is a lion in the way! a lion is in the streets!" (Pr. xxvi. 13,) while there is no insurmountable difficulty but that which lies in your own heart.

No wonder there are many and great difficulties in reforming an evil practice of this kind, which has got such deep root by length of time and is become so common. But it does not yet appear that they cannot be removed by the united wisdom and strength of the American colonies, without any injury to the slaves or disadvantage to the public. Yea, the contrary is most certain, as the slaves cannot be put into a more wretched situation, ourselves being judges, and the community cannot take a more likely step to escape ruin, and obtain the smiles and protection of Heaven. This matter ought, doubtless, to be attended to by the general assemblies, and continental and provincial congresses; and if they were as much united and engaged in devising ways and means to set at liberty these injured slaves as they are to defend themselves from tyranny, it would soon be effected. There were, without doubt, many difficulties and impediments in the way of the Jews liberating those of their brethren they had brought into bondage in the days of Jeremiah. But when they were besieged by the Chaldeans, and this their sin was laid before them, and they were threatened with desolation if they did not reform, they broke through every difficulty, and set their servants at liberty.

And how great must have been the impediments, how many the seeming unanswerable objections against reforming that gross violation of the divine command in Ezra's time, by their marrying strange wives, of which so many of the Jews were guilty, and the hand of the princes and rulers had been chief in this trespass! Yet the pious zeal of Ezra, and those who joined with him, and their wisdom and indefatigable efforts, conquered every obstacle and brought them to a thorough reformation. Would not the like zeal, wisdom, and resolution, think you, soon produce a reformation of this much greater abomination, by finding out an effectual method to put away all our slaves? Surely we have no reason to conclude it cannot be done till we see a suitable zeal and resolution among all orders of men, and answerable attempts are thoroughly made.

Let this iniquity be viewed in its true magnitude, and in the

shocking light in which it has been set in this conversation; let the wretched case of the poor blacks be considered with proper pity and benevolence, together with the probably dreadful consequence to this land of retaining them in bondage, and all objections against liberating them would vanish. The mountains that are now raised up in the imagination of many would become a plain, and every difficulty surmounted.

Pharaoh and the Egyptians could not bear to think of letting the Hebrews go out free from the bondage to which they had reduced them, and it may be presumed they had as many weighty objections against it as can be thought of against freeing the slaves among us. Yet they were at length brought to drop them all, and willing to send them out free, and to be ready to part with any thing they had in order to promote it.*

If many thousands of our children were slaves in Algiers, or any parts of the Turkish dominions, and there were but few families in the American colonies that had not some child or near relation in that sad state, without any hope of freedom to them or their children unless there were some very extraordinary exertion of the colonies to effect it, how would the attention of all the country be turned to it! How greatly should we be affected with it! Would it not become the chief topic of conversation? Would any cost or labor be spared, or any difficulty or hazard be too great to go through, in order to obtain their freedom? If there were no greater difficulties than there are in the case before us, yea, if they were ten times greater, would they not be soon surmounted as very inconsiderable? I know you, sir, and every one else, must answer in the affirmative without hesitation. And why are we not as much affected with the slavery of the many thousands of blacks among ourselves whose miserable state is before our eyes? And why should we not be as much engaged to relieve them? The reason is obvious. It is because they are negroes, and fit for nothing but slaves, and we have been used to look on them in a mean, contemptible light, and our education has filled us with strong prejudices against them, and led us to consider them, not as our brethren, or in any degree on a level with us, but as quite another species of animals, made only to serve us and our children, and as happy in bondage as in any other state. This has banished all

* It may be well worthy our serious consideration, whether we have not reason to fear the hand of God, which is now stretched out against us, will lie upon us, and the strokes grow heavier, unless we reform this iniquity, so clearly pointed out by the particular manner in which God is correcting us; and whether we have any reason to hope or pray for deliverance till this reformation takes place.

attention to the injustice that is done them, and any proper sense of their misery or the exercise of benevolence towards them.. If we could only divest ourselves of these strong prejudices which have insensibly fixed on our minds, and consider them as by nature and by right on a level with our brethren and children, and those of our neighbors, and that benevolence which loves our neighbor as ourselves, and is agreeable to truth and righteousness, we should begin to feel towards them, in some measure at least, as we should towards our children and neighbors in the case above supposed, and be as much engaged for their relief.

If parents have a son pressed on board a king's ship, how greatly are they affected with it! They are filled with grief and distress, and will cheerfully be at almost any cost and pains to procure his liberty; and we wonder not at it, but think their exercises and engagedness for his deliverance very just, and stand ready to condemn him who has no feeling for them and their son, and is not ready to afford all the assistance in his power in order to recover him. At the same time we behold vast numbers of blacks among us, torn from their native country and all their relations, not to serve on board a man-of-war for a few years, but to be abject, despised slaves for life, and their children after them, and yet have not the least feelings for them or desire of their freedom. These very parents, perhaps, have a number of negro slaves on whom they have not the least pity, and stand ready highly to resent it if any one espouses their cause so much as to propose they should be set at liberty. What reason for this partiality? Ought this so to be? An impartial person, who is not under the prejudices of interest, education, and custom, is shocked with it beyond all expression. The poor negroes have sense enough to see and feel it, but have no friend to speak a word for them, none to whom they may complain.

It has been observed, that if the general assemblies of these American colonies would take this matter in hand in earnest, with a concern and resolution answerable to its real importance, and the whole community were properly disposed and engaged, the freedom of the slaves among us might soon be effected without injury to the public or those who shall be set at liberty, but greatly to the advantage of both. But if this should be neglected, will it excuse individuals who have slaves in their continuing to hold them in bondage? I think not. If you, sir, had as many children in slavery at Algiers as you have African slaves in your house, would you take no pains and devise no method to obtain their liberty till the public should make some provision for the emancipation of all slaves

there? If any opportunity should present to obtain their liberty, would you not greedily embrace it, though at much hazard and expense? And if their master should refuse to let them go free till there was a general emancipation of the Christian slaves in that country, would you justify him as acting a proper, humane, and benevolent part? I trow not. How then can you excuse yourself, and deliver your own soul, while you have no compassion for these black children in your house, and refuse to break the yoke, the galling yoke, from off their necks, because your neighbors will not be so just and humane to theirs?

Some masters say they will give up their slaves if all masters will do the same, but seem to think they are excused from setting theirs free so long as there is not a general manumission. What has just been observed is suited, I think, to show the insufficiency of this excuse. Besides, if you desire to have all our slaves freed, why do you not set an example by liberating your own? This might influence others to do the same, and then you might with a good grace plead the cause of these poor Africans; whereas, while you retain your own slaves your mouth is stopped, and your example serves to strengthen others, and keep them in countenance, while they practise this abominable oppression.

A. My servants have cost me a great deal of money, and it is not reasonable I should lose all that. If the public will indemnify me and pay me what my servants are worth, I am willing to free them, and none can reasonably desire to do it on any other consideration.

B. If your neighbor buys a horse, or any beast, of a thief who stole it from you, while he had no thought that it was stolen, would you not think you had a right to demand your horse of your neighbor, and pronounce him very unjust if he should refuse to deliver him to you till he had received the whole sum he had given for him? And have not your servants as great a right to themselves, to their liberty, as you have to your stolen horse? They have been stolen and sold, and you have bought them, in your own wrong, when you had much more reason to think they were stolen than he who bought your horse had to mistrust he was trading with a thief. Though your horse has passed through many hands, and been sold ten times, you think you have a right to demand and take him, in whose soever hand you find him, without refunding a farthing of what he cost him; and yet, though your negroes can prove their right to themselves, and constantly make a demand upon you to deliver them up, you refuse till they pay the full price you gave for them, because

the civil law will not oblige you to do it. "Thou hypocrite!" (Luke xiii. 15.)

Had you not been amazingly inconsiderate and stupid, you would have concluded these men were stolen, and known that no man had a right to sell them, or you to buy them. And must they be forever deprived of their right, which is worth more to them than all you possess, because you have been so foolish and wicked as to buy them, and no one appears to prevent your losing by the bargain? You would do well to consider the awful denunciation by Jeremiah: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work!" He who refuses to free his negroes, that he may save his money and lay it up for his children, and retains his slaves for them to tyrannize over, leaves them but a miserable inheritance — infinitely worse than nothing.

Besides, if indifferent persons were to judge, it would doubtless be found that many of your servants, if not all, have much more than earned what they cost you, — some of them double and treble, yea, ten times as much, — and, in this view, you ought to let them go out free, and not send them away empty, but furnish them liberally out of your store, agreeably to the divine command, they having a much better right to part of your estate than your children, and, it may be, much more likely to make a good improvement of it.

A. You speak of servants earning so much; but, for my part, I think not so much of this. Mine have never been much profit to me, and most of them do not pay for their victuals and clothes, but are constantly running in debt.

B. The master is not a proper judge in this case. How common is it for men who hire others to complain that the laborers do not earn the wages they give, and that they are continually losing by all the labor they hire. And, if it were wholly left to him who hires what wages he should give the laborer, and he was accountable to none, how soon would his hire be reduced to little or nothing. The lordly, selfish employer would soon find out that his laborers hardly earned the food he was obliged to find them. Let your uninterested, judicious neighbors judge between you and your servants in this matter, and we will give credit to their verdict. And surely you have no reason to expect we will rely on yours, as you seem not really to believe it yourself, since it looks like a contradiction to your own declaration and practice; for you have been speaking of your servants as of as much worth to you at least as their first cost, and represented it as giving

up your interest if you should free them without a compensation; whereas, if what you now say be true, you will lose nothing by freeing them immediately, but rather get rid of a burden now on your hands. And if this be true, why do you not free them without delay? Your holding them in slavery is a practical contradiction to what you have now suggested.

I grant, what is evident to all the discerning who attend to it, that the introduction of such a number of slaves among us is a public detriment — an injury to the commonwealth; and, therefore, in this view, the practice ought by all means to be discouraged and abolished by our legislators. This, however, is consistent with individuals getting estates by the labor of their slaves; and that they are, in fact, in many instances very profitable to their owners, none can deny. And if this was not so, I should be very certain of obtaining what I am pleading for, even a general manumission.

A. You have repeatedly spoke of our slaves being hardly treated and abused. There may, perhaps, be some instances of this among us; but I believe they are generally treated very well, and many of them much better than they deserve. My servants, I am sure, have no reason to complain; they live as well as I do myself, and, in many respects, much better.

B. We will take it for granted, for once, that all you have said is true, and that your slaves are treated as well as they can be while they are held in a state of slavery. But will this atone for your making them your slaves, and taking from them that which is better to them than not only the best living, but all the riches on earth, and is as much to be prized as life itself — *their liberty?* As well, yea, with much more reason, may a highway robber tell a gentleman, from whom he has taken all his money, he has no reason to complain, since he had spared his life which was at his mercy, nor had wounded him or stripped him of his clothes, and go away pleased with the thought that he had treated him with great kindness and generosity.

If a ruffian should seize, ravish, and carry off a young virgin from all her relations and friends into some lonely cave in the wilderness, and when he got full possession of her there should treat her with great kindness, providing for her every necessary and comfort she could have in that situation; and when he was told of his violence and cruelty, and urged to restore her to her former liberty, he should refuse to release her, and, to justify himself, allege his kind treatment of her, that she had all the comforts of life, and lived better than himself, — would not this be so far from justifying him in the sight of the world, or being the least excuse for his barbarous treat-

ment of her, that his offering it as such would be considered as a striking evidence of his stupidity, and that he was an unfeeling, inhuman wretch? Whether such an instance is in any measure applicable to the case before us, I leave you to judge.

But I must now ask leave to take back what was just now granted, and observe that you are not a proper judge of your treatment of your slaves, and that you may think you treat them very well, in some instances at least, if not in a constant way; they justly think themselves used very hardly, being really subjected to many hardships which you would very sensibly feel and resent if you were in their place, or should see one of your children a slave in Algiers treated so by his master. There are but few masters of slaves, I believe, who do not use them in a hard, unreasonable manner, in some instances at least, and most do so in a constant way; so that an impartial, attentive bystander will be shocked with it, while the master is wholly insensible of any wrong. They who from us have visited the West Indies, have beheld how servants are used by their masters there with a degree of horror, and pronounced them very unreasonable and barbarous; while the master, and perhaps his other domestics, have thought they were used well, being accustomed to such usage and never once reflecting that these blacks were in any sense on a level with themselves, or that they have the least right to the treatment white people may reasonably expect of one another, and being habituated to view these slaves more beneath themselves than the very beasts really are. And are we not most of us educated in these prejudices, and led to view the slaves among us in such a mean, despicable light, as not to be sensible of the abuses they suffer, when if we or our children should receive such treatment from any of our fellow-men it would appear terrible in our sight? The Turks are by education and custom taught to view the Christian slaves among them so much beneath themselves and in such an odious light, that while they are treating our brethren and children, we being judges, in the most unreasonable and cruel manner, they have not one thought that they injure them in the least degree.

Are you sure your slaves have a sufficiency of good food in season, and that they never want for comfortable clothing and bedding? Do you take great care to deal as well by them in these things as you would wish others would treat your own children were they slaves in a strange land? If your servants complain, are you ready to attend to them? Or do you in such cases frown upon them, or do something worse, so as to discourage their ever applying to you whatever they may

suffer, having learned that this would only be making bad worse? Do you never fly into a passion and deal with them in great anger, deciding matters respecting them, and threatening them, and giving sentence concerning them, from which they have no appeal, and perhaps proceed to correct them, when to a calm bystander you appear more fit to be confined in Bedlam than to have the sovereign, uncontrollable dominion over your brethren as the sole lawgiver, judge, and executioner? Do not even your children domineer over your slaves? Must they not often be at the beck of an ungoverned, peevish child in the family; and if they do not run at his or her call, and are not all submission and obedience, must they not expect the frowns of their masters, if not the whip?

If none of these things, my good sir, take place in your family, have we not reason to think you almost a singular instance? How common are things of this kind, or worse, taking place between masters and their slaves? In how few instances, if in any, are slaves treated as the masters would wish to have their own children treated in like circumstances? How few are fit to be masters; to have the sovereign dominion over a number of their fellow-men, being his property, and wholly at his disposal, who must abide his sentence and orders, however unreasonable, without any possibility of relief?

A. I believe my slaves are so far from thinking themselves abused, or being in the least uneasy in a state of slavery, that they have no desire to be made free; and if their freedom were offered to them, they would refuse to accept it.

B. I must take leave to call this in question, sir; and I think you believe it in contradiction to all reason and the strongest feelings of human nature, till they have declared it themselves, having had opportunity for due deliberation, and being in circumstances to act freely, without the least constraint or fear.

There are many masters (if we believe what they say) who please themselves with this fond opinion of their goodness to their slaves, and their choice of a state of slavery in preference to freedom, without the least foundation, and while the contrary is known to be true by all who are acquainted with their slaves. If they really believe this, they by it only discover great insensibility and want of proper reflection. They have not so much as put themselves in the place of their slaves, so as properly and with due sensibility to consult what would be their own feelings on such a supposition. Have they themselves lost all desire of freedom? Are they destitute of all taste of the sweets of it, and have they no aversion to slavery for themselves and children? If they have these

feelings, what reason have they to conclude their servants have not?

But it seems most of those masters do not fully believe what they so often say on this head, for they have never made the trial, nor can they be persuaded to do it. Let them offer freedom to their servants and give them opportunity to choose for themselves without being under the most distant constraint; and if they then deliberately choose to continue their slaves, the matter will be fairly decided, and they may continue to possess them with a good conscience.*

Slaves are generally under such disadvantages and restraints, that however much they desire liberty they dare not so much as mention it to their masters; and if their master should order them into his presence and ask them whether they had a desire to be made free, many would not dare to declare their choice lest it should offend him, and instead of obtaining their freedom bring themselves into a more evil case than they were in before, as the children of Israel did by desiring Pharaoh to free them.

In this case such precaution ought to be taken as to give the slaves proper assurance that they may without any danger to themselves declare their choice of freedom, and that it shall be done to them according to their choice.

A. If slaves in general were made free, they would soon be in a worse state than that in which they now are. Many of them know not how to contrive for themselves so as to get a living, but must soon be maintained by their former masters or some others; and others would make themselves wretched, and become a great trouble to their neighbors and an injury to the public, by their unrestrained vices. This would doubtless be the case with most of mine were they set free, and some of them are by no means able to maintain themselves.

B. I confess this objection, at first view, seems to have some weight in it; but let us examine it, and see if it be sufficient to hold so many thousands in slavery, and their children after them, to the end of the world. Would you have all the white people, who are given to hurtful vices or are unwilling or unable to maintain themselves, made slaves, and their children after them, and be bought and sold for life like cattle in the market? Would you willingly give up your own children to this, to be slaves forever to any one who should be willing and able to purchase them, if they were as vicious or helpless as you suppose many of the blacks would be if set

* But this will give them no right to make slaves of their children, even if the parents themselves should expressly consent to it; for the parent can have no right to sell the liberty of his children.

at liberty? I am sure you will not answer in the affirmative; and by answering in the negative, as I know you must, you will entirely remove the reason you have now offered for holding the blacks in this slavery, till you can show why the latter should be treated so very differently from the former, which I am confident you will not attempt.

A state of slavery has a mighty tendency to sink and contract the minds of men, and prevent their making improvements in useful knowledge of every kind. It sinks the mind down in darkness and despair; it takes off encouragements to activity and to make improvements, and naturally tends to lead the enslaved to abandon themselves to a stupid carelessness and to vices of all kinds. No wonder then the blacks among us are, many of them, so destitute of prudence and sagacity to act for themselves, and some are given to vice. It is rather a wonder there are so many instances of virtue, prudence, knowledge, and industry among them. And shall we, because we have reduced them to this abject, helpless, miserable state by our oppression of them, make this an argument for continuing them and their children in this wretched condition? God forbid! This ought rather to excite our pity, and arouse us to take some effectual method without delay to deliver them and their children from this most unhappy state. If your own children were in this situation, would you offer this as a good reason why they and their posterity should be made slaves forever? Were some of your children unable to provide for themselves through infirmity of body or want of mental capacity, and others of them were very vicious, would you have them sold into a state of slavery for this? or would you make slaves of them yourself? Would you not be willing to take the best care of them in your power, and give them all possible encouragement to behave well, and direct and assist them in proper methods to get a living? I know you would. And why will you not go and do likewise to your slaves? Why will you not take off the galling yoke from their necks, and restore them to that liberty to which they have as good a claim as you yourself and your children, and which has been violently taken from them and unjustly withheld by you to this day? If any of them are disposed to behave ill and make a bad use of their freedom, let them have all the motives to behave well that can be laid before them. Let them be subject to the same restraints and laws with other freemen, and have the same care taken of them by the public. And be as ready to direct and assist those who want discretion and assistance to get a living as if they were your own children, and as willing to support the helpless, infirm, and aged.

And give all proper encouragement and assistance to those who have served you well, and are like to get a good living, if not put under peculiar disadvantages, as freed negroes most commonly are, by giving them reasonable wages for their labor if they still continue with you, or liberally furnishing them with what is necessary in order to their living comfortably, and being in a way to provide for themselves. This was the divine command to the people of Israel, and does it not appear at least equally reasonable in the case before us? When one of their brethren had served them the number of years that were specified, they were commanded to let him go out free; and then the following injunction is added: "And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine press; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him." (Deut. xv. 13, 14.)

If all who have slaves would act such a just, wise, and benevolent part towards them, and treat them in any measure as they would desire their own children and near relations should be treated, our slaves might all be set free without any detriment to themselves or the public, and their masters would be so far from losing by it that they would be abundantly rewarded for all their benevolence to these injured poor. And if our legislators would lend their helping hand, and form such laws and regulations as shall be properly suited to protect and assist those that are freed, and so as in the best manner to deter and restrain them from vicious courses, and encourage their industry and good behavior, this would be an additional security to the public against any imagined evil consequence of a general manumission of our slaves, and but a piece of justice to these poor, dependent creatures, whom we have made so by our own unrighteousness and oppression. This would encourage masters to free their slaves, and leave the objection we are now considering without the least shadow of foundation.

A. You are doubtless sensible, sir, that the legislatures in these colonies are so far from giving this encouragement to manumit our slaves, that the laws are rather a clog or hinderance to any thing of this kind, as they require the master to give security for the maintenance of his slaves if they should ever want any assistance, before he is allowed to make them free.

B. I am sorry to say there is too much truth in this. I hope our legislatures will soon attend with proper concern to this affair, and in their justice, wisdom, and goodness, enter

upon measures which shall encourage and effect a general emancipation of our slaves.

But if this should not be, I think it appears, from the course of this conversation, that this will not excuse those who have slaves from setting them at liberty, even though they should be obliged to maintain them all their days. If any slaveholder can lay his hand on his breast and sincerely say, if his children were slaves at Algiers he would not desire their master to free them unless he could do it without any risk of their ever being a charge to him, then let him still hold his slaves in bondage with a quiet conscience. Otherwise I see not how he can do it.

A. If it were granted that our slaves ought to be freed, if times and the public state of the American colonies would admit, yet in our present peculiar, calamitous, distressing state, it may be very imprudent and wrong and tend to great evil to adopt this measure. Most of the slaves in populous seaport places have now little or no business to do, and are supported by their masters, while they earn little or nothing. And if they should be dismissed by their masters, they could not maintain themselves, and must suffer. And the attention and exertion of the public is so necessarily turned to the defence of ourselves, and this civil war introduces such calamity and confusion, that it cannot be expected, yea, it is quite impossible that there should be any proper care of the public, so as to make the provision and regulations which would be absolutely necessary in this case. Though I suggested this in the beginning of our conversation, yet I think you have paid little or no attention to it. I wish this might be well considered.

B. I think the facts you have now alleged as reasons against freeing our slaves at present, will, if duly considered, afford arguments for the very thing you are opposing. The slaves who are become unprofitable to their masters by the present calamitous state of our country, will be with the less reluctance set at liberty, it is hoped; and if no public provision be made for them that they may be transported to Africa, where they might probably live better than in any other country, or be removed into those places in this land where they may have profitable business and are wanted, now so many are called from their farms to defend our country; I say, if this be not done, the masters, by freeing them, would lose nothing by it, even though they continue to support them, till some way shall be open for them to help themselves. I must here again desire every owner of slaves to make their case his own, and consider, if he or his children were unjustly in a state of slavery, whether he should think such an objection against

their being set at liberty of any weight. Would he not rather think it reasonable that the masters who had held them in bondage against all right and reason would consider their being, by an extraordinary providence, rendered unprofitable to them, as an admonition to break off their sins by righteousness and their iniquity by showing mercy to these poor, and that it ought to be a greater satisfaction to them thus to do justice without delay and relieve these oppressed poor, than to possess all the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world? And if these masters should disregard such an admonition and neglect this opportunity to set them at liberty, putting it off to a more convenient season, would it not be very grievous to him and overwhelm him in despair of their ever doing it? Is it not very certain that they who make this objection against freeing their slaves without delay, would not free them if the times should change and they again become profitable? If they must maintain them, can they not do it as well when they are free as while they are slaves, and ought they not to do it with much more satisfaction?

And as to the public, all necessary regulations and provision might easily and very soon be made, even in our present distressing circumstances, effectually to emancipate all our slaves, were the minds of men in general properly impressed with their misery, and they sufficiently engaged to do justice and show mercy.*

This objection might be urged with much greater show of reason by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, against freeing their servants when they were not only in a state of war, but shut up, and closely besieged in that city; yet we find it was their duty to free them immediately, as the only way to escape threatened destruction; and as soon as they had done this they had respite, and would have obtained final deliverance

* God is so ordering it in his providence, that it seems absolutely necessary something should speedily be done with respect to the slaves among us in order to our safety and to prevent their turning against us in our present struggle, in order to get their liberty. Our oppressors have planned to gain the blacks, and induce them to take up arms against us, by promising them liberty on this condition; and this plan they are prosecuting to the utmost of their power, by which means they have persuaded numbers to join them; and should we attempt to restrain them by force and severity, keeping a strict guard over them, and punishing them severely who shall be detected in attempting to join our opposers, this will only be making bad worse, and serve to render our inconsistence, oppression, and cruelty more criminal, perspicuous, and shocking, and bring down the righteous vengeance of Heaven on our heads. The only way pointed out to prevent this threatening evil, is to set the blacks at liberty ourselves by some public acts and laws, and then give them proper encouragement to labor, or take arms in the defence of the American cause, as they shall choose. This would at once be doing them some degree of justice, and defeating our enemies in the scheme that they are prosecuting.

had they not returned to their old oppression and again brought their freed servants into bondage.

This leads me to observe, that our distresses are come upon us in such a way, and the occasion of the present war is such, as in the most clear and striking manner to point out the sin of holding our blacks in slavery, and admonish us to reform, and render us shockingly inconsistent with ourselves, and amazingly guilty if we refuse. God has raised up men to attempt to deprive us of liberty, and the evil we are threatened with is slavery. This, with our vigorous attempts to avoid it, is the ground of all our distresses, and the general voice is, "We will die in the attempt, rather than submit to slavery." But are we at the same time making slaves of many thousands of our brethren, who have as good a right to liberty as ourselves, and to whom it is as sweet as it is to us, and the contrary as dreadful? Are we holding them in the most abject, miserable state of slavery, without the least compassionate feeling towards them or their posterity, utterly refusing to take off the oppressive, galling yoke? O, the shocking, the intolerable inconsistence! And this gross, barefaced inconsistence is an open, practical condemnation of holding these our brethren in slavery; and in these circumstances the crime of persisting in it becomes unspeakably greater and more provoking in God's sight, so that all the former unrighteousness and cruelty exercised in this practice is innocence compared with the awful guilt that is now contracted. And in allusion to the words of our Savior, it may with great truth and propriety be said, "If he had not thus come in his providence, and spoken unto us, (comparatively speaking,) we had not had sin in making bondslaves of our brethren; but now, we have no cloak for our sin."

And if we continue in this evil practice and refuse to let the oppressed go free, under all this light and admonition suited to convince and reform us, and while God is evidently correcting us for it as well as for other sins, have we any reason to expect deliverance from the calamities we are under? May we not rather look for slavery and destruction like that which came upon the obstinate, unreformed Jews? In this light I think it ought to be considered by us; and viewed thus, it affords a most forcible, formidable argument not to put off liberating our slaves to a more convenient time, but to arise, all as one man, and do it with all our might, without delay, since delaying in this case is awfully dangerous as well as unspeakably criminal. This was hinted in the beginning of our conversation, you may remember, and I am glad of an opportunity to consider it more particularly.

A. You have repeatedly spoken of the attempt that is made to oppress and enslave the American colonies, and the calamities this has introduced, as a judgment which God has brought upon us for enslaving the Africans, and say we have no reason to expect deliverance, but still greater judgments, unless this practice be reformed. But is not this supposition inconsistent with the course of divine Providence since this war began? Have we not been strengthened and succeeded in our opposition to the measures taken against us, even beyond our most sanguine expectations; and a series of events very extraordinary and almost miraculous have taken place in our favor, and so as remarkably to disappoint our opposers and baffle them in all their plots and attempts against us? How is this consistent with the above supposition? If these calamities were brought on us for our sin in enslaving the Africans, and an expression of God's displeasure with us on that account, would he in such a signal manner appear on our side and favor, protect, and prosper us, even so that those of our enemies who are considerate and attentive have been obliged to acknowledge God was for us; I say, could this be, while we persist in that practice so offensive to him?

B. When I speak of our being under the divine judgments for this sin of enslaving the Africans, I do not mean to exclude other public crying sins found among us, such as impiety and profaneness, formality and indifference, in the service and cause of Christ and his religion, and the various ways of open opposition to it — intemperance and prodigality, and other instances of unrighteousness, etc., the fruits of a most criminal, contracted selfishness, which is the source of the high-handed oppression we are considering. But that this is a sin most particularly pointed out, and so contrary to our holy religion in every view of it, and such an open violation of all the laws of righteousness, humanity, and charity, and so contrary to our professions and exertions in the cause of liberty, that we have no reason to expect, nor can sincerely ask deliverance, so long as we continue in a disposition to hold fast this iniquity. If we should be delivered while we continue in this evil practice, and obstinately refuse thoroughly to execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, but go on to oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, we should, agreeably to the spirit of what you have just said, improve such deliverance as God said the Jews would have done had he delivered them while they refused to reform. "Will ye steal, murder, etc., and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" (Jer. vii. 5–10.) Surely

this is not to be expected or desired. Even the prayer for such deliverance must be an abomination to the Lord.

But your objection is worthy of a more particular answer. It has been observed, that there has been a general resolution to suppress the slave trade in these colonies, and to import no more slaves from Africa. This is a remarkable instance of our professed regard to justice, and a wise and notable step towards a reformation of this evil, and, as has been observed, a complete reformation will be the unavoidable consequence, if we will be consistent with ourselves. For no reason can be given for suppressing the slave trade which is not equally a reason for freeing all those who have been reduced to a state of slavery by that trade; and that same regard to justice, humanity, and mercy which will induce us to acquiesce in the former, will certainly oblige us to practise the latter. Have we not, therefore, reason to think that the righteous and infinitely merciful Governor of the world has been pleased to testify his well-pleasedness with that regard to righteousness and mercy which we professed and appeared to exercise in refusing to import any more slaves, and which is an implicit condemnation of all the slavery practised among us, by appearing on our side in the remarkable, extraordinary manner you have mentioned, by which wonderful interposition in our favor he has, at the same time, given us the greatest encouragement not to stop what we have begun, but to go on to a thorough reformation, and act consistently with ourselves by breaking every yoke and doing justice to all our oppressed slaves, as well as to repent of and reform all our open, public sins? So that God is hereby showing us what he can do for us, and how happy we may be under his protection, if we will amend our ways and our doings, and loudly calling us to a thorough reformation in this most kind and winning way.

But if we obstinately refuse to reform what we have implicitly declared to be wrong, and engaged to put away the holding the Africans in slavery, which is so particularly pointed out by the evil with which we are threatened, and is such a glaring contradiction to our professed aversion to slavery and struggle for civil liberty, and improve the favor God is showing us as an argument in favor of this iniquity and encouragement to persist in it, as you, sir, have just now done, have we not the greatest reason to fear, yea, may we not with great certainty conclude, God will yet withdraw his kind protection from us, and punish us yet seven times more? This has been God's usual way of dealing with his professing people; and who can say it is not most reasonable and wise? He, then,

acts the most friendly part to these colonies and to the masters of slaves, as well as to the slaves themselves, who does his utmost to effect a general emancipation of the Africans among us; and, in this view, I could wish the conversation we have now had on this subject, if nothing better is like to be done, were published and spread through all the colonies, and had the attentive perusal of every American.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE OWNERS OF NEGRO SLAVES IN THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

Gentlemen: Since it has been determined to publish the preceding Dialogue, it was thought proper it should be attended with a particular address to you, who are more immediately interested in the slavery there considered.

It would be injurious, it is confessed, to consider you as the only persons guilty or concerned in this matter. The several legislatures in these colonies, the magistrates, and the body of the people, have doubtless been greatly guilty in approving and encouraging, or at least conniving at, this practice; — yea, every one is in a measure guilty who has been inattentive to this oppression, and unaffected with it, and neglected to bear proper testimony against it. And it is granted the public ought to go into some effectual measures to liberate all the slaves, without laying an unreasonable burden on their masters; but though this be not done, such neglect will not excuse you in holding them in slavery, as it is in your power to set them free, and your indispensable duty, and really your interest, to do them this piece of justice, though others should neglect to assist you as they ought.

It is hoped you will not be offended with the plainness of speech used on this subject, and that though you should at first think some of the epithets and expressions which are used too severe, and find the subject itself disagreeable, this will not prevent your attentively considering it, and weighing what is offered with the utmost impartiality and readiness to receive conviction, how much soever you may find yourselves condemned; for, if your practice is here set in a true light, — in which it must appear to all impartial, judicious, good men, and in which it will appear to all at the day of judgment, —

you must be sensible you cannot too soon admit the conviction, and reform. And here it cannot be improper to remind you of your liableness to strong prejudices, which tend to prevent your seeing what in itself may be very plain. Our divine Teacher says, "*Every one* that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." If you are indeed doing evil, according to the import of the preceding dialogue, these words of Christ are so far applicable to you, and are suited to awaken your jealousy of yourselves, and lead you to attend to the subject with great concern, circumspection, and earnest prayer to the Father of lights for that discerning and wisdom by which you may, in the case depending, come to the knowledge of the truth. And is it not worthy your serious consideration that they who are not interested in this practice, and have no slaves, are generally, if not every one, fully convinced it is wrong? Are they not, at least many of them, as capable of judging in this matter as you yourselves are? and, therefore, more likely to judge right than you, as they are uninterested and impartial? The conviction of the unjustifiableness of this practice has been increasing and greatly spread of late, and many who have had slaves have found themselves so unable to justify their own conduct in holding them in bondage, as to be induced to set them at liberty. May this conviction soon reach every owner of slaves in North America.

To this end you are desired to consider what is more than once urged in the dialogue, viz., —

The very inconsistent part you act while you are thus enslaving your fellow-men, and yet condemning and strenuously opposing those who are attempting to bring you and your children into a state of bondage much lighter than that in which you keep your slaves, who yet have at least as good a right to make slaves of you and your children as you have to hold your brethren in this state of bondage. Men do not love to be inconsistent with themselves; and, therefore, this is so evident and glaring, that, if you will only suffer yourselves to reflect a moment, it must give you pain, from which you can find no relief but by freeing your slaves, or relinquishing the cause of public liberty, which you have thought so glorious, and worthy to be pursued at the risk of your fortunes and lives.

A general assembly of one of these colonies* have expressed

* Rhode Island. This is a preamble to a proposed act, "prohibiting the importation of negroes into this colony, and asserting the rights of freedom of all those hereafter born or manumitted within the same." It is observable, at first view, that the reason given for this act is equally a reason for actually

their conviction of this inconsistence, and given it as a reason for freeing our slaves, in the following words: "Whereas the inhabitants of America are generally engaged in the preservation of their own rights and liberties, among which that of personal freedom must be considered as the greatest, and as those who are desirous of enjoying all the advantages of liberty themselves should be willing to extend personal liberty to others: therefore, be it enacted," etc.

Is it possible that any one should not feel the irresistible force of this reason? And who would be willing to practise this glaring self-contradiction, rather than let his servants go out free, even though he should hereby give up the greatest part of his living, yea, every penny he has in the world? With what propriety will all such inconsistent oppressors be addressed by HIM before whom masters and their slaves will shortly stand as their impartial Judge — "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant!"

Be intreated, also, seriously to consider how very offensive to God unrighteousness and the oppression of the poor, the stranger, and the fatherless is represented to be in the Holy Scripture. This is often spoken of as the procuring cause of the calamities that came on God's professing people of old, and of their final ruin. It may suffice to quote a few passages of this tenor, and refer you to places where others are to be found. "O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." (Jer. xxi. 12.) "The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them." (Eze. xxii. 29–31.) "Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,

freeing *all* the negro slaves in the colony without delay. As Rhode Island has been more deeply interested in the slave trade, and has enslaved more of the poor Africans, than any other colony in New England, it has been to the honor of that colony that they have lately made a law prohibiting the importation of any more slaves. How becoming, honorable, and happy would it have been had they acted up to the truth asserted in the preamble mentioned, and taken the lead of all the united colonies in effectually providing for the freedom of all their slaves!

Since the above was published, the general assembly of that State have made a law by which all the blacks born in it after March, 1784, are made free. And the masters who have slaves under forty years old are authorized to free them, without being bound, or liable to maintain them, if afterwards they should be unable to support themselves.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes." (Amos ii. 6.) "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken; yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts." (Zech. vii. 9–13.) See to the same purpose Isa. iii. 14, 15; x. 1–4. Jer. v. 27–29; vi. 6, 7; xxii. 13–17. Amos iv. 1, 2; v. 11, 12; viii. 4–8.

Are not the African slaves among us the poor, the strangers, the fatherless, who are oppressed and vexed, and sold for silver? And will not God visit and punish such oppression? Are you willing to be the instruments of bringing judgments and ruin on this land, and on yourselves and families, rather than let the oppressed go out free?

On the contrary, mercy, deliverance, and prosperity were often promised them, if they would leave off their oppressions and do justice and show mercy in delivering the oppressed, and showing kindness to the stranger and the poor. (Isa. i. 16–18.) "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." (Jer. vii. 1–7.) "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word and say, If ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if you oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place; then will I cause you to dwell in the land I gave to your fathers, forever and ever." (Jer. xxii. 3–5.) "Thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor widow; for if ye do this thing indeed," etc. (Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16; lviii. 6, etc. Jer. v. 1.)

How can we attend to the voice of God in these sacred writings, and not see that you are most clearly pointed out? And will you be affronted, or even disregard us, while we entreat and conjure you by all that is important and sacred, so far to regard these threatenings and promises, and pursue your own highest interest and that of the public, as to let your oppressed slaves go out free? Do not say, "This is too great a sacrifice for us to make; who will indemnify us if we give up our servants?" The sovereign owner of all things has

promised you indemnity, yea, infinitely more, deliverance from the awful curse which comes upon the oppressor, and his protection and blessing. And here it may be proper to remind you of the divine answer to the king of Judah, when being ordered to dismiss the mercenaries he had procured to assist him, he asked what he should do for the hundred talents which this army had cost him? "And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." (2 Chron. xxv. 6–9.)

Consider also how very inconsistent this injustice and oppression is with worshipping God through Christ, and attending on the institutions of religion, and how unacceptable and abominable these must be while you neglect to let the oppressed go free, and refuse to do justice and love mercy. The Bible is full of declarations of this. (Isa. lviii., and ch. i. v. 10–18. Amos v. 21, 22.)

"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." Without the former, the latter is nothing but gross hypocrisy and abomination to God; for he "will have mercy, and not sacrifice." He requires no devotion or attendance on any religious rite or institution which is inconsistent with mercy, or that is done without the love and exercise of mercy; but rejects all such prayers and service as most dishonorable and abominable to him. And when we consider that Christianity is the greatest instance and exhibition of righteousness and mercy that was ever known or can be conceived of, and the great Author of it is, in the most eminent and glorious degree, *the just God and the Savior*, we shall not wonder that no offering can be acceptable to him which is without the exercise and practice of righteousness and mercy, and that "he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy."

You who are professors of religion, and yet the owners of slaves, are entreated well to consider how you must appear in the sight of God, and of all who view your conduct in a true light, while you attend your family and public devotions, and sit down from time to time at the table of the Lord. If your neighbor wrong you of a few shillings, you think him utterly unfit to attend that sacred ordinance with you; but what is this to the wrong you are doing to your brethren, whom you are holding in slavery? Should a man at Algiers have a number of your children his slaves, and should by some means be converted and become a professor of Christianity, would you not expect he would soon set your children at liberty? And if after you had particularly dealt with him about it, and offered abundant light and matter of conviction of the

oppression and cruelty of which he was guilty, he should be deaf to all you could say, and resolve to hold them and their children in slavery, what would you think of him when you see him at his prayers, and attending at the Lord's supper? Would you think he was more acceptable to God than if he neglected these institutions, and yet had been so just and merciful as to set all his slaves at liberty? Yea, would you scruple to say his devotion and attendance on the holy supper were hypocrisy and abomination? If Nathan the prophet was here, he would say, "Thou art the man." *

The Friends, who are commonly called Quakers, have been for a number of years bearing testimony against this oppression as inconsistent with Christianity, and striving to purge themselves of this iniquity, rejecting those from fellowship with them who will not free their slaves. They indeed do not attend the Lord's supper, and it is granted they are herein neglecting an important institution of Christ; but ought it not to alarm you to think that while you are condemning them for this neglect, your attendance, in the omission of that righteousness and mercy which they practise, is inexpressibly more dishonorable and offensive to Christ than their neglect? These things you ought first to have done, to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke, and then not leave the other undone.

May you all, in this day of your visitation, know and practise the things that belong to your peace, and the safety and happiness of the united American colonies, by no longer oppressing these poor strangers wrongfully, and doing violence to them; but by executing judgment, relieve the oppressed, and deliver the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor. May this counsel be acceptable unto you, and you break off this your sin, and all your sins, by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to these poor, that it may be a lengthening of the tranquillity of yourselves, your families, and of this now distressed land.

* It is granted this oppression has been practised in ignorance by many, if not the most, who have been owners of slaves; and though this has been a very criminal ignorance, yet professors of religion and real Christians may have lived in this sin through ignorance, consistent with sincerity, and so as to be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, in their devotions, etc. But though God has in time past suffered us, ignorantly, to walk in this wicked way, he is now using special means to open our eyes, and commands all every where to repent of his iniquity. And they who persist in this sin in opposition to the clear light and alarming admonitions which are now set before us, will greatly aggravate their own guilt if they do not hereby give just reason to suspect the sincerity of their profession. Some who are in the Scriptures declared to be good men, lived in evil practices, consistent with sincerity in their attendance on divine institutions; in which practices no Christian can now live consistent with his Christian character, because we enjoy much greater light than they had, and these evil ways are more fully exposed and condemned

A DISCOURSE

UPON THE

SLAVE TRADE

AND THE

SLAVERY OF THE AFRICANS.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PROVIDENCE SOCIETY FOR ABOLISHING THE SLAVE TRADE, ETC.

AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 17, 1793.

TO

THE PROVIDENCE SOCIETY

FOR

ABOLISHING THE SLAVE TRADE, ETC.,

THE FOLLOWING

DISCOURSE

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

A

DISCOURSE

UPON

THE SLAVE TRADE, ETC.

The members of this respectable society, by whom I have been invited to deliver a discourse before them, at this their annual meeting, on the slave trade, and the consequent slavery of the Africans, and all those who are present on this occasion will not expect that any thing new will be said on a subject which has been so much canvassed of late, and on which so many have written and so fully exposed the unparalleled unrighteousness, inhumanity, and cruelty, and the odious and horrible attendants of it, by which great light has been thrown upon it, and the attention of millions turned to it, and they have been led to execrate it as a most shocking, outrageous violation of all the rights of man. And there are none, or very few now, except those whose minds are blinded, and their hearts hardened by custom and their supposed interest, who do not condemn it, as contrary to the true and best interest of society, and, therefore, think all lawful endeavors ought to be exerted to suppress and abolish it forever.

But as it is not easy fully to explore this business, and comprehend it in all its length and breadth, and realize all the evils included in it, it is highly proper and important often to renew our meditations upon it, and to take those methods which are suited to impress our minds and the minds of others more and more with the iniquity of this practice, viewed in every different light, and in all the evil consequences of it.

In this view, and to promote such a design, the attention, patience, and candor of this respectable audience are asked to the following observations, which shall be introduced by some of the last words of the benevolent Redeemer of man, — who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save, — which he spake to his disciples when he was about to leave the world and ascend to

heaven, — recorded by the evangelist Mark, 16th chapter and 15th verse of his gospel, —

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

This direction and command is an expression of the greatest benevolence to man. When the Son of God had become incarnate and taken upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, in order to make atonement for the sins of men, and bring in everlasting righteousness that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, and had risen from the dead, he ordered that this good news should be published through the whole world, and the offer of this salvation be made to all mankind, of whatever nation or complexion, whether Jews or Gentiles, the more civilized or barbarians, rich or poor, white or black; this being the only remedy for lost man, suited to recover him from that state of darkness, sin, and misery in which the world of mankind lay and must perish forever, were it not for this salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby they can be saved."

And, as this is an infinitely kind and benevolent injunction, it points out and commands a duty, an employment, which must be most agreeable and pleasing to every benevolent mind, whatever labor and expense it may require. And they may reasonably think themselves highly favored and honored to whom ability and opportunity are given to preach the gospel, the unsearchable riches of Christ, to any of their fellowmen; or who are under advantage to promote this design, by any exertion in their power.

As the gospel affords the only relief for fallen man, so it is a sufficient and complete one, where the spirit of it is cordially imbibed and it is properly improved for the purposes which it is suited to promote. It raises sinners from the greatest moral depravity, guilt, and misery, to a state of light, pardon, and peace, and brings them finally to the enjoyment of complete and endless felicity.

This institution of Heaven, when properly attended to, understood, and cordially embraced, turns men from darkness to marvellous light. If it finds them in a state of savage ignorance and barbarity it civilizes them, and forms them to be intelligent and good members of society. It subdues the selfishness, pride, and worldly-mindedness of men, and all their inordinate lusts, and "teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." It raises the mind to the sight and

contemplation of the most sublime, important, and entertaining objects, and manifests those truths, and gives that light, which are received with pleasing love and admiration; which make men truly wise, and animate them to the practice of every personal, social, and religious duty. It forms men to uprightness and the practice of righteousness, to universal benevolence and goodness; teaching them to love their neighbor as themselves, and to do to other men as they would that others should do unto them. So far as it spreads and has influence on the hearts and lives of men, it banishes the manifold evils under which mankind have groaned in all ages, and introduces peace, love, and harmony among men, and unites them together into a happy society, in which every one puts on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving each other in love; each one studying and exerting himself to do good to all men, according to his ability and opportunity. At the same time, it forms men to the most sincere, uniform, and rational piety, in the exercise of love to God and the Redeemer, and to all his friends and servants; and they have joy and peace in believing and serving Jesus Christ, and their hope of eternal life in the kingdom of Christ is built and flourishes on the best and most sure foundation.

This command of Christ, to preach the gospel to all the nations in the world, respects not only the apostles and disciples who then heard him speak, and the ministers of the gospel in general who have since been, or are now, or shall be, appointed to that work, but is extended to all Christians, in every age of the church, requiring them in all proper ways, according to their ability, stations, and opportunities, to promote this benevolent design, and exert themselves for the furtherance of the gospel, that, if possible, all may hear and share in the happy effects of it. They who are not called to be preachers of the gospel may, in many ways, assist those who are sent forth to this work, and do much to forward the propagation and spreading of Christianity; not only helping by their prayers, but by liberal contributions of their substance, and by many other labors and exertions. Every true disciple of Christ who understands the gospel, and prizes it above silver and gold, and whose heart is expanded with love to Christ and benevolence to his fellow-men, must not only wish and pray that all nations may enjoy the blessings of it, and come to the knowledge of this saving truth, but considers it as an unspeakable privilege to be in any way, and in the least degree, an instrument of promoting this design, whatever labor and expense it may require. And it is owing to the great

and inexcusable wickedness of men that the gospel did not soon spread all over the world after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and was not embraced by all men from that day down to this time; which would have prevented the many and dreadful evils which have reigned in the world in all this period, and introduced a glorious scene and series of happy events, which exceed our present conception. Therefore, it can be attributed to nothing but the depravity of mankind that the command of the Savior has not been obeyed, and all men have not been made to share in the saving blessings of the gospel, but that it has been, and still is, so unsuccessful in the world.

Would we know the nature and excellence of Christianity, and the happy tendency of it to promote the good of mankind, both temporal and eternal, we must not expect to learn it from the general appearance of it in what is called the Christian part of the world, and the effect it now has on the greatest part of those who enjoy the light of it; but we must look into our Bibles, where it is properly and to the best advantage described, and all the doctrines and precepts which it contains are plainly written by the pen of inspiration; and there we are taught the effect it had on those who cordially embraced the gospel in the days of the apostles, and to what an excellent character it formed those who became true Christians; and we are informed by credible historians what a happy effect it had in the world where it spread and was embraced for the first two or three centuries after the ascension of Christ, until the administration of it was perverted by wicked men, who, with all their worldliness and pride, crept into the church, and perverted Christianity in its very nature and design, both in doctrine and practice, to accommodate it to their selfishness and pride, and so as to answer their own worldly ends. And there have been numbers who in all ages since, in the midst of the general apostasy and corruption, have held fast the form of sound doctrine contained in divine revelation, and in their life and practice have been the humble, harmless followers of Christ, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they have shone as lights in the world, exhibiting an amiable example of faith, patience, righteousness, and benevolence, of which excellent character, we trust, there is a number now in the Christian world, and among us.

Among many other evil things which have prevailed in this apostate world are tyranny and slavery, introduced and practised by the lusts, the selfishness, pride, and avarice of men, which have been the source of unspeakable unhappiness and misery. The gospel is suited to root these evils out of the

world, and wholly abolish slavery; and will have this effect where it is fully and faithfully preached, and cordially received and obeyed. For where this takes place, no one will forfeit his liberty, and, therefore, must have a right to it; and no man will make a slave of another, were it in his power, who has not forfeited his liberty by the sentence of proper judges; for in so doing, he would act contrary to the precepts of Christianity.

The following precept of our Lord and Savior, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," which is included in loving our neighbor as ourselves, will set at liberty every slave who has not forfeited his freedom, or to whom slavery can be considered as undesirable and a calamity, whenever it is properly regarded and reduced to practice.

Christianity being, in the nature and tendency of it, and the particular precepts which it contains, thus opposed to slavery, did gradually, even in its most corrupt state, root it out among the nations in the Christian world, so that it was almost, if not wholly, abolished for some centuries, until it took place again, in a manner and degree which was never known before among any nation or people since the world began, in the abominable slave trade with the Africans, and their consequent slavery. That this business, which is such a gross and open violation not only of the genius and precepts of Christianity, but of the rights and feelings of humanity, should be undertaken and carried on by nations who call themselves Christians, and by individuals who bear that name, is truly astonishing. It is impossible fully to describe, or to have an adequate conception of, the crimes which have been committed in this business, or the evils which have attended it. If a man of observation, discernment, and humanity had attended this trade many years, and spent the residue of his life in the West Indies, under the best advantage to see the inhumanity and cruelty, and the various crimes, which take place in the treatment of the slaves, and the innumerable miseries which they suffer, he would, after all, have but a very partial idea and conception of the whole, and know but little, compared with all of this kind which takes place. How low and faint, then, are our conceptions of this enormous evil! The great Omnipotent alone, who will bring every work of man into judgment, with every secret thing, has a full, clear, and perfect knowledge of the whole of this great evil.

Suffice it now, in a few words, to say, that, by this trade in the bodies and souls of men, millions have been violently torn from their native country and from every thing dear to them; in the accomplishment of which, fire and sword, war and deso-

lation, and slaughter of numbers exceeding our reckoning have taken place through a vast extent of country, and multitudes have been induced to betray, steal, and sell their countrymen and neighbors. Many thousands of these, thus taken from their country and all the enjoyments of life and liberty, and all their dearest connections, have died on board the ships, in their passage to the West Indies or to other countries, and the rest have been sold, like brute beasts, into perpetual slavery, with their posterity after them, where the most of them are treated in a manner beyond description inhuman and cruel, by owners, masters, and overseers, many, if not the most, of whom are hardened against all the feelings of humanity towards their slaves, and are themselves a nuisance and burden to the earth; so that the West India islands, in general, are become the greatest resemblance of the infernal regions that can be found in this world.

In this general, but very superficial and scanty view of the slave trade and the slavery connected with it, who can forbear pronouncing that they who have encouraged, prosecuted, or supported this traffic in their fellow-men, — though some of them may have done it in ignorance and unbelief, — have really been the emissaries of Satan, and agents for him who delights in the wickedness and misery of mankind? And though they live in Christian lands, and call themselves Christians, and whatever plausible pretences they may make, they have all been really acting most contrary to the nature and precepts of Christianity, and doing the works of the devil; and nothing can be more dishonorable to the gospel and the Author of it than to attempt to reconcile this practice with Christianity.

This, indeed, has been attempted by some; and, among other things, it has been pretended that this treatment of the Africans was right and commendable, as it was the way to Christianize them, by bringing them from a heathen to a Christian land. But is this obedience to the command of the Savior — "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"? Is it not directly contrary to this command? Does this direct men to go into heathen lands and take men by force from their own country, and destroy a great part of them, and reduce the rest to the most abject slavery, in order to make Christians of them? Does it not rather command us to carry the gospel to them, and to take all proper pains, in the most friendly manner, to instruct and persuade them to embrace it, without any force or compulsion, that they may be happy in their own land while they live, and be saved from sin and misery forever? Do the dealers in slaves make

any attempts to carry the gospel to Africa and propagate it there? Do they say a word to their slaves about the gospel, or do any thing that tends to lead them to embrace it? Has not their whole conduct, in their treatment of the Africans, a direct and strong tendency to the contrary? The slave trade, in the manner in which it has been carried on, tends to beget the strongest prejudices against Christianity in the inhabitants of the vast continent of Africa, and actually has done it in many nations; and nothing could have been done by those who bear the name of Christians more effectually to prevent the introduction of the gospel into that part of the world, and more directly to counteract the command of Christ to preach the gospel to them. And how do those who are brought from that country, and put into a state of slavery, and treated as the slaves generally are in the West Indies, naturally and unavoidably look upon these dealers in slaves, who are called *Christians?* Is it possible they should look upon them in a better light than we do the savages, not to say the inhabitants of the infernal regions? What, then, must they think of Christianity? Is this the way to persuade them to be Christians? What could be done more to prevent it? Many millions of these poor creatures have doubtless lived and died with the greatest aversion to Christianity, and even the name of a Christian, from the treatment they have received from those who have called themselves Christians. And if any have embraced the gospel and become real Christians, in circumstances tending so strongly to prejudice against it, this must be ascribed to the extraordinary, wonderful, and no less than miraculous interposition of divine power and grace; and no thanks are due to the dealers in slaves, whose whole conduct has been counteracted in these instances. And can it be believed that these dealers in slaves have carried on this unchristian, inhuman, and cruel business with a view to Christianize those whom they thus injure and oppress, or from any motives of benevolence or humanity? This seems impossible. But if this were possible, the treatment of these slaves demonstrates that no such motives exist while no proper methods are taken to instruct them in Christianity; and, in most instances, there has been not only no care taken to instruct them, but constant care and exertions to prevent it, added to the prejudices against Christianity which have been mentioned. And there is no reason to consider those many millions of slaves, who have been made so by this trade, as under any better advantages for instruction, or to become Christians, than if they had lived and died in their own country, a few instances only excepted. No; this business has

been begun and carried on from that sordid selfishness and avarice which fortify men's hearts against the truths and precepts of the gospel, and will lead them to do the work of the evil one, in order to get money and promote what they consider to be their worldly interest.

Had all those who have had a hand in this anti-Christian business, by which so many millions of our fellow-men have been murdered or treated as brutes, or both, been disposed to take as much pains, and be at as great cost to send the gospel to Africa and instruct and Christianize the many nations in that part of the world, as they have taken and expended to enslave and destroy them, and thus prejudice them against Christianity, they would probably have been the means of spreading the gospel over that vast continent, of civilizing those barbarous nations, and of the salvation of millions, and would have prevented the destruction and misery of which they have been the occasion and instruments, and would have had the reward of such a benevolent work, and escaped the guilt which now lies upon them and the awful consequence.

This observation opens a scene to our view which is enough to overwhelm the attentive, pious mind, and must, therefore, be now only mentioned. A future judgment, an eternity to come, will unfold the whole, of which we can now have but a transient glimpse.

This enormous iniquity and wide-spreading evil — the slave trade, with its consequences, which has been carried on and advanced to such a degree for more than a century by kings and their people in the Christian world — is an evidence, among many others, and serves to confirm the opinion, that the sixth vial, mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation, has been running during this time. It is there predicted, that under this vial three unclean spirits, the spirits of devils, working miracles or wonderful things, should go forth to the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The work of these spirits is to excite men, especially in the Christian world, to extraordinary and wonderful degrees of wickedness, by which they unite in arming themselves against Heaven, and are prepared for the judgments which will follow. Who can attend to the slave trade, in the manner in which it has been prosecuted, with the extent and consequences of it, and not be convinced that the hand and power of Satan has been in an extraordinary degree exerted and manifested in it, stirring men up to a kind and degree of wickedness and mischief which was not known before?

And shall this shameful practice, this evil, which has got

such deep root, and is spread so far and wide, never have an end? Can no stop be put to those wicked men who are devouring their fellow-men who are more righteous than they? Must this gross and open violation of the rights of man, of the laws of God, and the benevolent religion of the Savior continue forever? Shall the horrid scene of unrighteousness, violence, cruelty, and misery, which has so long taken place in the West Indies and Africa, never be abolished?

Thanks be to God! He has assured us that all these works of the devil shall be destroyed, and that the time is hastening on, when all the people shall be righteous and benevolent, and there shall be none to destroy or hurt in all the earth; and what has taken place of late, gives reason of hope and confidence that this sore evil will soon be made to cease. The attention of thousands and millions has been awakened and turned to this subject; much has been written upon it, and light and conviction have had a rapid and extensive circulation. Numerous societies have been voluntarily formed wholly to abolish this evil; and there is reason to conclude that this light and conviction, and these exertions, will continue and increase till the slave traders shall be utterly destroyed.

But why is this work still opposed or neglected by any? Why are not the cries of the millions of Africans in bondage heard by all? Why do they make no more impression on the public mind, and rouse all to feel for the wretchedness of so great a part of their fellow-men, and to exertions for their relief? Why is the British Parliament so slow to abolish the slave trade, and no more influenced by the evidence laid before them of the cruelties and murders which attend this traffic, and of the moral and political evils produced by it, and by the repeated, earnest, and powerful applications made to them?

And as to some of us Americans, what shall we say? We have reason to reflect with painful shame upon the hand we have had in this iniquity, by which so many thousands of our fellow-men, as good by nature as we are, have been destroyed, or put into a state of the most abject slavery, in the West Indies, or brought to this continent and sold like cattle, and, in most instances, treated as if they were not men.

In the year 1774, when Britain appeared to threaten a war with us, and was disposed to deny to us some part of the liberty which we claimed, and we had a prospect of entering into a bloody contest in defence of our own rights, the slave trade, which had been practised by us, appeared so inconsistent with our contending for our own liberty, that a Congress, which then represented these now United States, made a solemn resolution, in the name of all the people whom they repre-

sented, in the following words: "We will neither import, nor purchase any slaves imported, after the first day of December next; after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, or sell our commodities or manufactures, to those who are concerned in it." And all the people appeared to acquiesce in this resolution, as reasonable, important, and necessary, in order to act a consistent part while contending for their own liberties, and to have any ground of hope in the protection and smiles of a righteous God, and success in the struggle into which we were entering. With this resolution we entered the combat, and God appeared to be on our side, and wrought wonders in our favor, disappointed those who rose up against us, and established us a free and independent nation.

After all this, could it have been expected, would it have been believed, if predicted, that such a resolution, so reasonable and important, on which the hope of success was in a great measure grounded, and which was doubtless one means of it, should be so far forgotten and counteracted that a convention, met to form a constitution, could not agree upon one, unless it did secure the continuance of the importation of slaves, for a number of years at least? — that the Congress of the United States should so long neglect to suppress this trade, so far as it is acknowledged they have authority to do it, through the opposition made to such a measure by a small minority? — that notwithstanding laws have been made by a number of these states, prohibiting this trade in human flesh, it is yet carried on openly, (*horresco referens*,) especially in this state, and yet the law be eluded, and cannot be executed? — that there are hundreds of thousands of slaves in these states, and no effectual measures are taken, where the most of them are, to give them a proper education and emancipate them, as soon as it may be done consistent with their best good and that of the public?

When all this is taken into view by the truly pious, who fear God and believe his word, is it to be wondered at that their flesh trembleth for fear of the righteous judgments of God? Are they to be condemned as superstitious enthusiasts? Have we not all reason to fear that the vengeance of Heaven will fall upon us, as a people, in ways perhaps which are not now thought of, unless we repent and reform?

But may we not hope for better things? — that this evil practice will be better investigated, and soon utterly suppressed? — that benevolence and compassion towards the miserable Africans will be so sensibly, and with such strength,

exercised towards them by the people in general, that all proper measures will be taken to make them a free and happy people? And if it be necessary, in order to this, that they should return to Africa, — the continent which seems to be best suited to their constitution, — may we not wish and hope that such a desire to compensate them, as far as we may, for the injuries we have done them, and such a spirit of benevolence will be excited, that we shall with cheerfulness contribute every thing necessary to answer this end?

We may hope that all this dark and dreadful scene will not only have an end, but is designed by the Most High to be the means of introducing the gospel among the nations in Africa; that those who have embraced the gospel while among us, with all who have been, or may be, in some good measure civilized and instructed, will, by our assistance, return to Africa, and spread the light of the gospel in that now dark part of the world, and propagate those arts, and that science, which shall recover them from that ignorance and barbarity which now prevail, to be a civilized, Christian, and happy people, making as great improvement in all useful knowledge, and in the practice of righteousness, benevolence, and piety, as has yet been done by any people on earth, and much greater. Thus all this past and present evil which the Africans have suffered by the slave trade, and the slavery to which so many of them have been reduced, may be the occasion of an over-balancing good; and it may hereafter appear, as it has in the case of Joseph being sold a slave into Egypt, and the oppression and slavery of the Israelites by the Egyptians, that though the slave traders have really meant and done that which is evil, yet God has designed it all for good, the good of which all this evil shall be the occasion.

Ought not this prospect to animate us earnestly to pray for such a happy event, and to exert ourselves to the utmost to promote it? Can we be indifferent and negligent in this matter, without slighting and disobeying the command of Christ, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature? And will not such an attempt to send the gospel to Africa, being willing to spare no expense or labor thus to spread the knowledge of the Savior among the nations there, be a proper expression of our love and regard to this benevolent, important injunction?

To this end, let us be firm, wise, and active in pursuing every proper measure to abolish the slave trade and put an end to the slavery of the Africans, which is so contrary to the gospel, and has opposed and is now a hinderance to the propa-

gation of it in Africa, and is so injurious to the spiritual and temporal interest of all who have any connection with it.

May none of this respectable society, from selfish and sinister views, or from fear of man, or partial favor and affection to any, or from indolence and neglect, act a part inconsistent with the benevolent design of it, or unworthy of a member of it; but may every one, with the utmost care, circumspection, fidelity, and fortitude, act a consistent part, and persevere in constant endeavors to promote the important end of this institution, whatever may be the opposition from ignorant, interested men, knowing that he is engaged in the cause of God and human nature.

Let us consult and determine what we may do in favor of the blacks among us, especially those who are free, in protecting them from oppression and injuries, by encouraging and assisting them to industry and a prudent management of their worldly affairs, attempting to reform the vicious, to instruct the ignorant, and promote morality, virtue, and religion among them, and providing for the education of their children in useful learning, that they may be raised to an acknowledged equality with the white people, and some of them, of the most promising abilities and piety, be fitted to preach the gospel to their brethren in Africa, and that numbers may be the better prepared to move to that region, and settle there, and set an example of industry and wisdom in cultivating the land of that fertile country, and of the practice of Christianity, which will have the best tendency to civilize those now barbarous nations, to spread the light of the gospel among them, and persuade them to be Christians.

Is there not good reason to believe, that if this nation, the inhabitants in the United States of America, both high and low, rulers and ruled, had a proper view and sense of the unrighteousness of the slave trade and the slavery of the Africans, and of the sore calamity and misery of millions of our fellow-men in Africa, the West Indies, and on this continent, as the effect of this iniquity, not only a stop would be put to this trade, and all the slaves among us be set free as fast as possible, but such strong compassion would be excited towards these injured, miserable men, and desire and zeal to make all possible compensation to them, and render them happy, that no exertions or expense would be thought too much which would be required to transport those to Africa who should be disposed to go and settle there, and to furnish them with every thing necessary and convenient for their being settled there in the best circumstances suited to promote

their temporal and eternal happiness, and of the nations on that vast continent? How happy, if we, as a people and nation, should cheerfully unite in this from motives of justice and benevolence, and a desire that the gospel may be preached to every creature! How unhappy, if we should be forced to part with the slaves in these states, and send them away, from the motives of fear and distress which induced the Egyptians to part with their dearest treasures in order to thrust out and send the Israelites from them, whom they had injured and abused! It is very possible that one of these may take place.

If the former, and we should cheerfully agree to do this injured people all the justice and show them all the kindness in our power, we should not only take the most probable method to avert the divine judgments and obtain the smiles of Heaven, and take, perhaps, the best method in our reach to promote the propagation of the gospel, but we, especially some of the southern states in the Union, would be delivered from the sin and calamity of the slavery which now takes place, which is a great moral and political evil, however insensible they may now be of it. And such a settlement in Africa, properly conducted and supported, might be greatly beneficial to the commercial interest both of this nation and of those in Africa, and, in the end, produce a temporal good and prosperity, which might, as far as is now practicable, atone for the evils of the slave trade and slavery.

But, be this as it may, we may be assured that we are engaged in a cause which will finally prosper. The slave trade, and all slavery, shall be totally abolished, and the gospel shall be preached to all nations; good shall be brought out of all the evil which takes place, and all men shall be united into one family and kingdom under Christ the Savior; and the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. In the prospect of this we may rejoice in the midst of the darkness and evils which now surround us, and think ourselves happy if we may be, in any way, the active instruments of hastening on this desirable predicted event. Amen.

APPENDIX.

THE proposal of assisting the blacks among us to go and make a settlement in Africa, which has been mentioned in the preceding discourse, I have thought to be of such importance as to require a more particular explanation to be laid before the public, with the reasons for it, for their consideration; hoping that, if it be generally approved, it will excite those united, generous exertions which are necessary in order to effect it.

There are a considerable number of free blacks in New England and in other parts of the United States, some of whom are industrious and of a good moral character, and some of them appear to be truly pious, who are desirous to remove to Africa and settle there. They who are religious would be glad to unite as Christian brethren, and move to Africa, having one instructor or more, and cultivate the land which they may obtain there, and maintain the practice of Christianity in the sight of their now heathen brethren, and endeavor to instruct and civilize them, and spread the knowledge of the gospel among them.

In order to effect this in the best manner, a vessel must be procured, and proper sailors provided to go to Africa, with a number of persons, both white and black, perhaps, who shall be thought equal to the business, to search that country, and find a place where a settlement may be made with the consent of the inhabitants there; the land being given by them, or purchased of them, and so as best to answer the ends proposed. If such a place can be found, as no doubt it may, they must return, and the blacks must be collected who are willing to go and settle there, and form themselves into a civil society, by agreeing in a constitution and a code of laws, by which they will be regulated.

And they must be furnished with every thing necessary and proper to transport and settle them there in a safe and comfortable manner; with shipping and provisions, till they can procure them in Africa by their own labor; and with instruments and utensils necessary to cultivate the land, build houses, etc., and have all the protection and assistance they will need, while settling and when settled there. And, if necessary, a number of white people must go with them; one or more to superintend their affairs, and others to survey and lay out their lands, build mills and houses, etc. But these must not think of settling there for life; and the blacks are to be left to themselves when they shall be able to conduct their own affairs, and need no further assistance, and be left a free, independent people.

This appears to be the best and only plan to put the blacks among us in the most agreeable situation for themselves, and to render them most useful to their brethren in Africa, by civilizing them, and teaching them how to cultivate their lands, and spreading the knowledge of the Christian religion among them. The whites are so habituated, by education and custom, to look upon and treat the blacks as an inferior class of beings, and they are sunk so low by their situation and the treatment they receive from us, that

they never can be raised to an equality with the whites, and enjoy all the liberty and rights to which they have a just claim; or have all the encouragements and motives to make improvements of every kind, which are desirable. But if they were removed to Africa this evil would cease, and they would enjoy all desirable equality and liberty, and live in a climate which is peculiarly suited to their constitution. And they would be under advantages to set an example of industry, and the best manner of cultivating the land, of civil life, of morality and religion, which would tend to gain the attention of the inhabitants of that country, and persuade them to receive instruction and embrace the gospel.

These United States are able to be at the expense of prosecuting such a plan, of which these hints are some of the outlines. And is not this the best way that can be taken to compensate the blacks, both in America and Africa, for the injuries they have received by the slave trade and slavery, and that which righteousness and benevolence must dictate? And even selfishness will be pleased with such a plan as this, and excite to exertions to carry it into effect, when the advantages of it to the public and to individuals are well considered and realized. This will gradually draw off all the blacks in New England, and even in the Middle and Southern States, as fast as they can be set free, by which this nation will be delivered from that which, in the view of every discerning man, is a great calamity, and inconsistent with the good of society, and is now really a great injury to most of the white inhabitants, especially in the Southern States.

And by the increase and flourishing of such a plantation of free people in Africa, where all the tropical fruits and productions and the articles which we fetch from the West Indies may be raised in great abundance, by proper cultivation, and many other useful things procured, a commerce may take place and be maintained between those settlements and the United States of America, which will be of very great and increasing advantage to both.

And this will have the greatest tendency wholly to abolish the abominable trade in human flesh, and will certainly effect it, if all other attempts prove unsuccessful.

That such a plan is practicable, is evident from the experiment which has lately been made in forming a settlement of blacks at Sierra Leone. Above a thousand blacks were transported from Nova Scotia to that place last year, who, by the assistance of a small number of whites and supplies from England, have formed a town and plantation, which, by the latest accounts, is now in a flourishing condition, the inhabitants living in peace and amity with the neighboring nations, and with a promising prospect of being a great advantage to them, by teaching them to cultivate their lands and civilizing them, and showing them the advantages of peace and of industry, and trade in the productions of their country, and spreading the knowledge of Christianity among them. This will gradually put an end to the slave trade and to slavery in that part of the continent. And from this settlement there is a rational prospect of a commerce in the productions of that climate with Britain, which will be so profitable as more than to compensate the latter for all the expense of forming and carrying it on, and will be greatly advantageous to both nations.

There is reason to believe that a settlement may be made by the blacks now in the United States in some part of Africa, either on the River Sierra Leone or in some other place, which will be as advantageous to those who shall settle there and to the adjacent nations as this which has been mentioned, and with much less expense, and which will be a greater benefit to this nation than that may be to Britain.

Are there not, then, motives sufficient to induce the legislature of this nation to enter upon and prosecute this design, to form a plan and execute it, as wisdom shall direct? And is there not reason to think that it would meet

with general approbation? But, if this cannot be, may not this be effected by the societies in these states who are formed with a design to promote the best good of the Africans? Would not this be answering the end of their institution in the best way that can be devised, and in imitation of that which has been formed in Great Britain for the same purpose?

Is there not reason to believe that, if such a plan was well digested and properly laid before the public, and urged, with the reasons which offer, and a company or committee formed to conduct the affair, there might be a sum collected sufficient to carry it into effect?

The general court in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts did, some time ago, make a resolve to the following purpose: That when a place can be found in Africa where the blacks in that state may settle to their advantage, they would furnish them with shipping and provisions sufficient to transport them there, and with arms sufficient to defend them, and farming utensils sufficient to cultivate their lands. If all the states in the Union, or most of them, would take the same measure, such a design might be soon and easily carried into execution. Nothing appears to be wanting but a proper, most reasonable zeal in so good a cause.

THE SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY.*

When the public or any part of the community are taking those measures, or going into that practice, which may issue in ruin, and most certainly will, unless reformed, he who foresees the approaching evil cannot act a benevolent or faithful part unless he gives warning of the danger, and does his utmost to reform and save his fellow-citizens, even though he should hereby incur the displeasure and resentment of a number of individuals. In this view, Crito asks the candid attention of the public to what he has to say on the following interesting and important subject.

Some, perhaps, will not choose to read any further, but drop this paper with a degree of uneasy disgust, when they are told the subject to which their attention is asked is the African slave trade, which has been practised, and in which numbers in these United States are now actually engaged. So much has been published within a few years past on this subject, describing the fertile country of Africa, and the ease and happiness which the natives of that land enjoy, and might enjoy to a much greater degree, were it not for their own ignorance and folly, and the unhappy influence which the Europeans and Americans have had among them, inducing them to make war upon each other, and by various methods to captivate and kidnap their brethren and neighbors, and sell them into the most abject and perpetual slavery, — and at the same time giving a well-authenticated history of this commerce in the human species, pointing out the injustice, inhumanity, and barbarous cruelty of this trade, from beginning to end, until the poor Africans are fixed in a state of the most cruel bondage, in which, without hope, they linger out a wretched life, and then leave their posterity, if they are so unhappy as to have any, in the same miserable state, — so much has been lately published, I say, on these subjects, that it is needless particularly to discuss them here. It is sufficient to refer the inquisitive to

* Originally published in the Providence Gazette and Country Journal. — Ed.

the following books, viz., several Tracts, collected and published by the late Anthony Benezet, of Philadelphia; "A Dialogue concerning the Slavery of the Africans," lately reprinted at New York by order of the society there for promoting the manumission of slaves, and protecting such of them as have been, or may be, liberated; and especially "An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the Africans," by Thomas Clarkson, which was honored with the first prize in the University of Cambridge for the year 1785. If the African slave trade, and the consequent slavery of the negroes in the West Indies and in the United States of America, be an open and gross violation of the rights of mankind, a most unrighteous, inhuman, and cruel practice, which has been the occasion of the death of millions, and of violently forcing millions of others from their dear, native country, and their most tender and desirable connections, and of bringing them to a land of slavery, where they have not a friend to pity and relieve them, but are doomed to cruel bondage, without hope of redress, till kind death shall release them, as is represented, and seems to be abundantly proved, in the above-mentioned publications and many others, a conviction of which is fast spreading among all ranks of men in Europe and America, then the following terrible consequence, which may well make all shudder and tremble who realize it, forces itself upon us, viz., all who have had any hand in this iniquitous business, whether more directly or indirectly, have used their influence to promote it, or have consented to it, or even connived at it, and have not opposed it by all proper exertions of which they have been capable, — all these are, in a greater or less degree, chargeable with the injuries and miseries which millions have suffered, and are suffering, in consequence of this trade, and are guilty of the blood of millions who have lost their lives by this traffic of the human species. Not only the merchants who have been engaged in this trade, and for the sake of gain have sacrificed the liberty and happiness, yea, the lives of millions of their fellow-men, and the captains and men who have been tempted by the love of money to engage in this cruel work, to buy, and sell, and butcher men, and the slaveholders of every description, are guilty of shedding rivers of blood, but all the legislatures who have authorized, encouraged, or even neglected to suppress it to the utmost of their power, and all the individuals in private stations who have in any way aided in this business, consented to it, or have not opposed it to the utmost of their ability, have a share in this guilt. It is, therefore, become a national sin, and a sin of the first magnitude — a sin which righteous Heaven has never suf-

fered to pass unpunished in this world. For the truth of this assertion we may appeal to history, both sacred and profane.

We will leave the inhabitants of Britain and other European nations who have been, and still are, engaged in the slave trade, to answer for themselves, and consider this subject as it more immediately concerns the United States of America.

Hundreds of thousands of slaves have been imported into these states, many thousands are now in slavery here, and many more thousands have been brought from Africa by the inhabitants of these states, and sold in the West Indies, where slavery is attended with cruelty and horror beyond description. And who can reckon up the numbers who have lost their lives and been really murdered by this trade, or have a full conception of the sufferings and distresses of body and mind which have been the attendants and effects of it? All this blood which has been shed constantly cries to Heaven; and all the bitter sighs, and groans, and tears of these injured, distressed, helpless poor have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts, and are calling and waiting for the day of vengeance. The inhabitants of Rhode Island, especially those of Newport, have had by far the greater share in this traffic of all these United States. This trade in the human species has been the first wheel of commerce in Newport, on which every other movement in business has chiefly depended. That town has been built up, and flourished in times past, at the expense of the blood, the liberty, and happiness of the poor Africans; and the inhabitants have lived on this, and by it have gotten most of their wealth and riches. If a bitter *woe* is pronounced on "him who buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong," (Jer. xxii. 13,) "to him who buildeth a town by blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity," (Hab. ii. 12,) "to the *bloody* city," (Ezek. xxiv. 6,) what a heavy, dreadful woe hangs over the heads of all those whose hands are defiled by the blood of the Africans, especially the inhabitants of that state, and of that town, who have had a distinguished share in this unrighteous, bloody commerce! All this and more follows as a necessary consequence, which it is presumed none will dispute, on supposition the before-mentioned publications give, in any measure, a just representation of the slave trade and the consequent slavery of the Africans, and unless thousands and millions of all ranks, and of the most disinterested, and many of them men of the best, abilities and character for knowledge, uprightness, and benevolence, and who are under the greatest advantages to know the truth and judge right of this matter, both in Europe and America,—unless *all those* are grossly deluded.

But if all these may be fairly confuted, and the African slave trade, and the consequent treatment of those who are by means of this reduced to slavery, can be justified, and shown to be consistent with justice, humanity, and universal benevolence, then the whole of this consequence will be obviated, and all the supposed guilt of injuring our fellow-men in the highest degree, and of shedding rivers of innocent blood, will be wiped away as a mere phantom, and vanish as the baseless fabric of a night vision. It is earnestly to be desired, therefore, if this be possible, that some able, disinterested advocate for the slave trade, if such a one can be found, would step forth and do it. But if there be no such man, let the interested, and those who are in this traffic, and the slavery of the Africans arise and show it to be just and benevolent, if they can. We will promise you a candid and patient hearing, for we desire to justify you if it were possible. If this can be done to the satisfaction of all, it would remove from our minds a set of painful feelings, which cannot be easily described, and dissipate a gloom which now hangs heavy upon us, in the view of the exceeding depravity, unrighteousness, and cruelty of men who, for a little gain, will deluge millions in slavery and blood, with an unfeeling heart, and their eyes fast shut against the glaring light which condemns their horrid deeds, and in the painful prospect of the dreadful vengeance of Heaven for such daring outrage against our fellow-men, our brethren. But, until this be done, this business must be unavoidably viewed in the most disagreeable, odious, horrible light by us. And we must be suffered to consider, and lay before the public, some of the great aggravations which attend the continuation of this practice by us in these United States. When the inhabitants of these states found themselves necessarily involved in contentions with Britain in order to continue a free people, and had the distressing prospect of a civil war, they, being assembled in Congress, in October, 1774, did agree and resolve, in the following words: "We will neither import, nor purchase any slave imported, after the first day of December next; after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures, to those who are concerned in it." This reasonable, noble, and important resolution was approved by the people in general, and they adhered to it through the war, during which time there was much publicly said and done which was at least an implicit and practical declaration of the unreasonableness and injustice of the slave trade and of slavery in general. It was repeatedly declared in Congress,

as the language and sentiment of all these states, and by other public bodies of men, "that we hold these truths to be self-evident, that *all men* are created *equal;* that they are endowed with certain *unalienable rights;* that among these are *life*, *liberty*, and the pursuit of happiness." "That all men are born equally *free* and *independent*, and have certain natural, inherent, and unalienable rights, among which are, the defending and enjoying *life* and *liberty*, acquiring, possessing, and protecting *property*, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. By the immutable laws of nature, all men are entitled to life and liberty," etc. The Africans, and the blacks in servitude among us, were really as much included in these assertions as ourselves, and their right, unalienable right to liberty, and to procure and possess property, is as much asserted as ours, if they be *men;* and if we have not allowed them to enjoy these unalienable rights, but violently deprived them of liberty and property, and still taking as far as in our power all liberty and property from the nations in Africa, we are guilty of a ridiculous, wicked contradiction and inconsistence, and practically authorize any nation or people, who have power to do it, to make us their slaves. The whole of our war with Britain was a contest for *liberty*, by which we, when brought to the severest test, practically adhered to the above assertions, so far as they concerned ourselves at least; and we declared in words and actions that we chose rather to *die* than to be slaves, or have our liberty and property taken from us. We viewed the British in an odious and contemptible light, purely because they were attempting to deprive us by violence in some measure of those our unalienable rights; but if at the *same time*, or since, we have taken or withheld these same rights from the Africans or any of our fellow-men, we have justified the inhabitants of Britain in all they have done against us, and declared that all the blood which has been shed in consequence of our opposition to them is chargeable on us. If we do not allow this, and abide by the above declarations, we charge ourselves with the guilt of all the blood which has been shed by means of the slave trade, and of an unprovoked and most injurious conduct in depriving innumerable Africans of their just, unalienable rights, in violently taking and withholding from them all liberty and property, holding them as our own property, and buying and selling them as we do our horses and cattle, reducing them to the most vile, humiliating, and painful situation. This whole contest, it must be again observed, was suited to bring and keep in our view, and impress on our minds, a deep and lasting sense of the worth of liberty, and the unrighteousness of taking it from any man, and, consequently,

of our unrighteousness and cruelty towards the Africans. If it were known that the wise Governor of the world had determined to take some method to convince us of the injustice of the slave trade and of the slavery of the Africans, and manifest his displeasure with us for it, and use means suited to reform us, could we conceive of any measures which might be better suited to answer this end than those which have actually taken place in this war, considered in all the circumstances of it? It would be thought impossible that every one who then was, or had been, active in reducing the Africans to the abject and suffering state in which they are in the West Indies, and even among us, should not reflect upon it with self-condemnation, regret, and horror, had not experiment proved the contrary. And while we execrated the British for taking our men and ordering them to be transported to the East Indies, and for crowding so many of our people into prisons and prison ships, — where they died by thousands, without any relief or pity from them, — was it possible for us not to reflect upon our treatment of the Africans, in transporting so many thousands of them from their native country to a land of slavery, while multitudes, being crowded and shackled in our ships, have died on their passage, without one to help or pity them? Could any avoid seeing the righteous hand of God stretched out against us, and retaliating our unrighteous, cruel treatment of them in a way suited to strike conviction into our minds of our guilt, and of the righteous displeasure of Heaven with us for these horrid deeds which had been done by us? Surely we had good reason to espouse the language of the brethren of Joseph, in a similar case: "We are verily guilty concerning our brethren the Africans, in that we saw the anguish of their souls under our cruel hands; and they besought us, and cried for pity, but we would not hear; *therefore is this distress come upon us.*" Is it possible that the Americans should, after all this, and in the face of this light and conviction, and after they had obtained liberty and independence for themselves, continue to hold hundreds of thousands of their fellow-men in the most abject slavery? — and not only so, but, notwithstanding their resolutions and declarations, renew and carry on the slave trade, and from year to year convey thousands of their fellow-men from their native country to a state of most severe and perpetual bondage? This would have been thought impossible, was it not known to be true in fact; and who can describe the aggravated guilt which the Americans have brought upon themselves by this? If this was a Heaven-daring crime of the first magnitude before the war with Britain, how much more criminal must we be *now*, when, instead

of regarding the admonitions of Heaven and the light and conviction set before us, and repenting and reforming, we persist in this cruel practice! What name shall be given to their daring presumption and hardiness, who, from a thirst for gold, have renewed this trade in slaves, in the bodies and souls of men, and of those whom they employ in this inhuman, horrid business?

> "Is there not some chosen curse,
> Some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven,
> Red with uncommon wrath, to blast these men,"—

who owe their riches to such aggravated, detestable crimes, now necessarily involved in carrying on this trade?

And is not Heaven frowning upon us *now?* We are as yet disappointed in our expectations of peace, prosperity, and happiness, in consequence of liberty and independence. Instead of rising to honor, dignity, and respect among the nations, we have suddenly sunk into disgrace and contempt. Our trade labors under great disadvantages, and is coming to nothing. We have lost our money, having parted with the greatest part of it, not to pay our debts, but for foreign luxuries or unnecessaries, and those things which might have been manufactured among ourselves. Our public and private debts are not paid, but are increasing. A spirit of discontent and murmuring, and jealousy of our rulers, and complaining of them, has spread among us, and in some places insurrections, and open, violent opposition to government, have taken place, which have proceeded to plunder and shedding blood. Divisions and contentions have taken place among ourselves, and seem to be hastening to universal confusion and anarchy. There is a general complaint of *evil times;* and where is the family or man to be found which does not sensibly share in the general calamity, and is not involved in some peculiar difficulty? The British are so far from being at peace with us, that they have done much to bring on the before-mentioned evils. They are attempting to ruin our trade as much as is in their power, and refuse to deliver up to us the western posts, which we claim, and put on a hostile appearance, which may soon issue in an open war. The Indians are making war upon us, and kill and captivate the inhabitants of the western settlements, and threaten to be yet a more dreadful scourge to us. The Algerines, without any provocation, are captivating our ships, and carry our men into slavery; and we have no power to redeem them, or to put a stop to their further depredations. The State of Rhode Island, in particular, — which, as has been shown, has had a distinguished hand in the slave trade, — is fallen into a disagreeable and very calamitous situation.

Great animosities and contentions with each other have arisen. They are divided into parties, and biting and devouring one another. Public injustice is established by law. They have lost their credit abroad, and are become the subject of ridicule, reproach, and contempt. Their trade and all business are discouraged, and almost ruined; and Newport, the metropolis, is fast going to poverty and inevitable ruin, unless some unforeseen event should take place to prevent it. Wherefore is all this come upon us so suddenly, and in such a remarkable and unexpected manner? Is not the hand of God very visibly stretched out against us? And must there not some Achan be found with us, which has provoked the Most High to bring all this evil upon us, after he had wrought for us and delivered us in such a remarkable manner, and which must be put away before we can reasonably expect to prosper? And is not the renewal of the slave trade, and our continuing to hold so many thousands of our fellow-men in slavery, one principal ground of the divine displeasure? Surely none can doubt of this who view it in the light in which it has been represented above. Other sins and follies have been the means of the evils which are come upon us, such as idleness, intemperance, luxury, and extravagance, in a variety of ways, a neglect to encourage and carry on manufactories, and discourage the importation of unnecessary foreign articles, and opposition to the imposts proposed by Congress, etc. But may not this folly and infatuation itself be justly considered as a judgment which has come upon us, as the just consequence of our persisting in this aggravated, capital, and horrid crime? If this trade and the slavery of the Africans can be vindicated, and proved to be consistent with ourselves, just, and laudable, we again declare we wish to see it done. But if this cannot be done, — and we must be allowed at present to be confident it cannot, — then there is no other hopeful way to escape yet greater evils but by repentance and reformation. Of what importance, then, is it that all ranks and orders of men among us should turn their attention to this matter, and repent, and do works meet for repentance, by reforming and exerting themselves in their several places, and, according to their advantages and abilities, entirely to suppress this evil practice! Is it not to be wished that the convention of these states, now sitting at Philadelphia, may take this matter into serious consideration, and at least keep it in view, while they are forming a system of government, that the supreme power of these states may be able effectually to interpose in this affair? If the above representation be in any way agreeable to the truth, in vain are the wisest counsels and the

utmost exertions to extricate ourselves from present evils, or avoid greater, unless the *slave trade*, and all the attendants of it, be condemned and suppressed. If we persist in thus transgressing the laws of Heaven, and obstinately refuse to do unto these our brethren as we would all men should do unto us, we cannot prosper. It has been, with justice, publicly lamented that Congress has not power to redeem those of our brethren who have fallen into the hands of the Algerines, and are reduced to slavery by them, and as an intolerable evil to have them neglected and left in wretched circumstances for so long a time. But why do we "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel"? Why should we be so stupid and partial as to turn all our attention to these *few sufferers*, and wholly overlook the sufferings of so many thousands among us, and of the thousands who are brought from their dear native country and all their relations, and fixed in perpetual slavery, by a set of pirates and banditti from among ourselves, as hardened against the groans and sufferings of their fellow-men, as unjust and cruel, as the most abandoned among the Algerines? In the name of reason and true benevolence, it is asked why the latter, which is before our eyes, and an evil incomparably greater than the former, is wholly overlooked as not worthy of any regard, and the former fixed upon as a most affecting, intolerable instance of suffering, — which, at the same time, may be considered as a small degree of retaliation for our enslaving the Africans, and is suited to remind us of it, and to open our eyes to see, and make us feel our unrighteousness and cruelty towards them, and our gross inconsistency and self-contradiction in condemning these Algerines, the inhabitants of Africa, — and at the same time not condemning ourselves, who are infinitely more criminal, but by our conduct are really justifying them? Had we any supreme legislature in these states, could they not easily restrain all the subjects from being concerned in the slave trade? And would they not bring the guilt of it on themselves should they not do it? And why have not the several legislatures in these United States done it? Why do they tolerate and connive at it while it is carried on, at least in some states, in their sight? Is it because it is thought to be the most profitable trade of any now carried on, and they are unwilling to prevent the introduction of the money which is brought into some of these states by this means? Some have suspected this to be the truth; but we will not admit it. Is it, then, because they do not attend sufficiently to the matter, and are not sensible of the unrighteousness and cruelty of the trade? or is it because they judge it not in their power, and that

they have no right and authority to interpose in this affair? This has been asserted by some, whether with reason or not it may be worth while seriously to consider. The Quakers, who have done more than any others to acquit themselves of the guilt of the slave trade, and have discovered more humanity and regard to the laws of Christ, in this instance, than any other denomination of Christians, (to the praise of the former and the shame of the latter it must be spoken,) they have, among their many other exertions in opposition to this trade, lately applied to the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island, praying them to devise some way to put a stop to the slave trade which is carried on by a number of persons in that state, which petition is now under consideration; and it is said they determine to petition all the legislatures in these United States to do the same. It is hoped they will not refuse to do any thing they have a right and power to do utterly to abolish this iniquity in these states, but they should fasten the guilt of it more than ever on themselves and on their constituents. It is said by some that this trade does not properly come under the cognizance of any legislature in these states, as they cannot make laws to bind their subjects when out of the limits of their jurisdiction, or punish them for what they do in Africa or the West Indies, especially as the slave trade is there tolerated and protected by law, custom, and general consent. This, perhaps, is the only objection that has been, or can be, offered against the legislatures of these states interposing to suppress this trade. It therefore deserves a particular examination.

It is granted by all, that common pirates may be punished by the laws of any state, when apprehended, wherever or in whatever part of the world their crimes were committed. There is good reason for this, it will be said, because these men are guilty of intolerable crimes, which are reprobated by all nations, and have really turned enemies to mankind, and, therefore, ought to be punished wherever they can be apprehended. To this it may be replied, that the slave trader who buys and sells his fellow-men, by which traffic he is the means of the death of many, and of reducing others to the most miserable bondage during life, is as really an enemy to mankind as the pirate, and violates common law, which is, or ought to be, the law of all nations, and is guilty of crimes of greater magnitude, exercises more inhumanity and cruelty, sheds more blood, and plunders more, and commits greater outrages against his fellow-men than most of those who are called pirates. In short, if any men deserve the name of pirates, these ought to be considered in the first and highest class of them; and if there be

no law against this commerce of the human species in Africa, or in Britain and in the West India islands, and this trade is tolerated in all these places, and elsewhere, does this make the practice less evil in itself, or more tolerable? Is this any reason why it should be tolerated by the legislatures in America? If it was the custom of those who carry on the slave trade to put to death one half of the men who sail in their ships when they arrive at the coast of Africa, and sell the other half of them, and this were tolerated there, and these traders found means to entice great numbers of our men to sail with them to Africa every year, by which thousands of our people were murdered or enslaved, would it be thought our legislatures had no right to restrain them, and at least banish every sea captain who was guilty of this, because the crime is not committed where they have jurisdiction, and where such cruelty and murder are tolerated, and not considered as crimes? For, in such an instance, the crime would not consist in shipping men on board their vessels, but in their treatment of them after they arrived at Africa. Could there be found a man, not interested in such a business, who would make this objection, or a legislature who would think it of the least weight? Surely no. But it would be of as much weight in the case proposed as in that under consideration. The Algerines have taken a number of Americans, and sold them into slavery. Have we not a right, ought we not, had we power, to oblige them to deliver them up, and set them at liberty, and lay such restraints upon them as to put it beyond their power to perpetuate such crimes in future? Would the plea of their being out of the limits of our jurisdiction be a good reason to suffer them to go on in their injuries without restraint? These American states ought to vindicate the rights of mankind, and promote their liberty and happiness, to the utmost of their power. Every state ought to pity the ignorance, weakness, and wickedness of the Africans, and afford them all the relief, protection, and assistance in their power, and do their utmost to restrain those of their subjects from hurting them who otherwise would take advantage of their distance from us, and of their ignorance and weakness. How, then, can they sit still, and suffer their subjects to carry on this horrible commerce, big with so much cruelty and murder, and be guiltless? On the whole, will it not appear to every impartial, benevolent man, who well attends to the matter, that if our legislatures refuse to interpose in this case, and will not at least outlaw those who are concerned in this trade and persist in it, it must be owing either to their not attending to and realizing the mag-

nitude of the crime and the evil involved in this commerce, or to some less excusable cause, if such there may be?

But if the legislature should neglect to do any thing which it is thought they might and ought to do, will this excuse the people at large? Might they not, if they were alarmed and engaged as they ought to be, if the above representation be in any measure just, do that which would effectually suppress among us this hideous, threatening evil? When our contention with Britain was coming on, the man who openly appeared active on their side was abandoned as unworthy the rights and privileges of society, and in many instances his neighbors withdrew all connection and commerce with him; and this was justified as a proper and important measure. And are not these men, who are carrying on this trade and enslaving and destroying their fellow-men, without any provocation from them, and hereby bringing guilt on these states and the awful judgment of Heaven, — are they not unworthy the privileges of freemen? Ought they not to be considered as enemies to mankind, and murderers of their brethren for the sake of gold, and real pests and plagues to society? And would not treating them as such effectually reform them, or banish them from among us? It has been observed, that when the war with Britain was coming on, we resolved not only that we would wholly discontinue the slave trade ourselves, *but that we would not "hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures, to those who are concerned in it.*" If this resolution was reasonable and important then, it is as much, and more so, *now;* and this, fully put into practice, would put an effectual stop to it.

Shall we not, then, by this neglect, bring the guilt of this trade and the blood of the Africans on our own heads and on our children? And how dreadful will be the consequence, who can tell? The warning is given, and that is all that can be done by

CRITO.

October 13th, 1787.

A DISCOURSE

ON

CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP,

AS IT SUBSISTS

BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIEVERS

AND

BETWEEN BELIEVERS THEMSELVES.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1767, AND ORIGINALLY DIVIDED INTO SIX SEPARATE SERMONS.

A DISCOURSE

ON

CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend. — Cant. v. 16.

Friendship affords the highest and most sweet enjoyment that is to be had in this life, or that rational creatures are capable of. Yea, it is in some sense the *only* source of real enjoyment and happiness; so that to be perfectly without this, in every kind and degree of it, is to be wholly destitute of all true enjoyment and comfort. This gives pleasure and sweetness to all other enjoyments, and without this they all fade, and become insipid and worthless; yea, every thing will be rather a burden, and worse than nothing; whereas this will give a degree of enjoyment and pleasure when stripped of every other good. So that he who is in circumstances to exercise and enjoy friendship is in a degree happy, let his situation and condition otherwise be what it may; and it is impossible he should be entirely miserable so long as he is within reach of this sweet, this Heaven-born cordial.

It is probable that the most voluptuous sensualist that lives would in a great measure lose his high relish for the pleasures he is so eagerly pursuing, and all his sweets would be turned into bitterness, if he should feel himself perfectly, and in every sense, friendless; for none can be found, however sunk and sordid their minds have become by vice, who have no sort of taste for friendship, though it may be, on the whole, a very corrupt taste. To be sure, if any such may be found, they seem to be sunk, in this respect, below the brutal creation; for it is observed that among them there is an appearance of love of society, and at least a resemblance of love and friendship.

However lost to all true friendship mankind in general are, yet a desire of the esteem and love of others is found in every breast, and is as essential to man as a desire of happiness, and, therefore, cannot be rooted out but by destroying his natural powers, by which he will cease to be man.

Hence it is that no inconsiderable part of the future misery of the wicked will consist in feeling themselves perfectly friendless, and the objects of the hatred and contempt of all intelligent existence in the universe, while they find themselves in every respect in the most wretched, deplorable circumstances, and have a most keen aversion to being hated and contemned, and a strong desire of the love and esteem of others.

As real or disinterested benevolence is essential to true friendship, we have reason to think there are but few instances of it in this degenerate, selfish world; and where it does take place in any degree, it is in a very low and imperfect one; so that what many in all ages have been convinced of and asserted from long experience may be relied upon as a certain truth, that this is a friendless world. However, there is a sort of friendship which is, at bottom, a merely selfish thing, being founded only in self-love, or which is the result of what may be called *instinct*, or natural affection, which is very common, and in many instances rises very high, and answers many valuable purposes to mankind in this present state, it being many ways of great service to mankind, as it prevents many evils that would otherwise take place, and promotes the good of society, and often gives a degree of pleasure and enjoyment. But, so far as true virtue or holiness takes place, a foundation is laid for a different kind of friendship, which is immensely higher, more noble and excellent, and consists in exercises and enjoyments which surpass those of all other friendships more than the exercises and enjoyments of improved reason excel those of a brute, or the brightness of the meridian sun that of the meanest glowworm.

And God has, in his adorable wisdom and goodness, contrived and provided that this friendship should be exercised and enjoyed in the highest perfection, being raised to the greatest possible heights, and attended with the best and most advantageous circumstances.

The Scripture leads us to conceive of the Deity as enjoying infinitely the most exalted and glorious friendship and society in himself, for which there is a foundation in the incomprehensible manner of his subsistence in the three persons of the adorable Trinity. Here eternal love and friendship takes place and flourishes to an infinite degree, in infinitely the most perfect and glorious society, the Elohim, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the society and friendship for which men are formed by holiness — without which they cannot be perfectly happy — may be considered as an imitation and image of this, by which they are made in the like-

ness of God, and partake with him in the same kind of happiness which he enjoys to an infinite degree. And, in order that men might partake with him in the exercise and enjoyment of love and friendship to the highest degree and the greatest advantage, God has not only laid a plan to promote and effect the highest and most perfect love and friendship towards each other in the most exalted and happy society forever, but has so contrived that they shall be brought into the nearest and most intimate union and friendly intercourse with himself, by which they shall in some sense, yea, to a great degree, be united to the eternal and most glorious divine society, and partake of the same river of enjoyment and pleasure which proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, in a peculiar and eminent sense.

To effect this in the best manner and to the greatest advantage, the invisible God, who eternally dwelt in the high and holy place, infinitely beyond the comprehension and reach of a creature, must come down and make himself visible, that he might be the head, the life, and soul of a visible and most glorious society. This has been done in the incarnation of the Son of God, by which the greatest purposes of God's moral kingdom are answered in the highest possible degree, and all happy intelligences, especially the redeemed from among men, are brought into a near union with God, and are under special advantages to receive communications from him, and enjoy his love and friendship in a manner and degree which could not have been in any other way. This is the mutual love and friendship spoken of in the text, which takes place between the incarnate Son of God, the divine Redeemer of lost men, and his church or spouse, or every one of the redeemed.

He is in a peculiar and distinguished sense the friend of the redeemed, and he is the beloved of their soul in a sense and degree in which no other person is, or can be; and hence there is a mutual love and friendship between them, which is beyond comparison the most intimate, intense, sweet, and exalted of any thing of the kind between any other friends and lovers, unspeakably surpassing all other friendships in nature and degree, attended with the highest, most noble, transporting, soul-ravishing enjoyment and delight that can possibly exist or be conceived of.

This union of hearts, this mutual love and friendship between Christ the Redeemer and Savior and believers in him, or the redeemed, is represented in Scripture by the inclination and affection between the two sexes of which mankind consist, under the influence of which they mutually seek and

come into a peculiar union and intimacy with each other, in which they may enjoy each other, and be happy in the exercise of mutual love and friendship. It is represented by the sweet love and affection between the bridegroom and his bride, and the mutual love and friendship and solemn engagements by which the husband and his spouse are united and become one, and are happy in each other; and this similitude is, beyond doubt, most wisely and properly chosen, by which to represent this spiritual union and friendship, as it is, in many respects, the most lively, striking emblem and image of it that can be found in all nature; and is especially calculated to give men the best and most clear idea of it, and to give and keep up in their minds a conviction and sense of the reality, nature, and happiness of such a union, love, and friendship.

This seems to be the design of this Song from which the words of the text are taken. It is, indeed, a love song, in which the highest, most noble, pure, and honorable love and friendship between Christ and his people are represented and celebrated under the similitude of two lovers, whose hearts are united in the strongest, purest, and sweetest love of esteem, benevolence, and complacency, in the exercise of which they desire and seek the enjoyment of each other in the nearest union and greatest intimacy, in the near relation of husband and spouse. This is, therefore, called *The Song of Songs*, i. e., the most excellent song, especially the best and most excellent of all the songs of Solomon, which we are told were a thousand and five, as the theme, the subject, and matter of it is by far the most important, entertaining, excellent, and sublime; in order to which Solomon was divinely inspired.

As the virtuous, pious, and pure love between a man and his spouse is, in many respects, the most lively and instructive image of the union and love between Christ and his church, God, in his wisdom and goodness, saw fit to give such a representation of it in a divine song, as what was greatly needed, and would be exceeding useful to his church and people; and though the carnal and inattentive, or those who are strangers to this divine love and friendship, may call it all foolishness, and in their boasted wisdom despise and ridicule it, or improve it only to carnal, low, and obscene purposes, yet the children of true wisdom will justify the wisdom of God herein, and adore his goodness, while they find themselves instructed, quickened, and edified hereby; and every true, chaste virgin, who is espoused to Christ as the best friend and spiritual husband, will attend to it, and meditate upon it, with a peculiar relish and sweet and holy delight, which unspeakably surpasses every thing the unholy soul can enjoy, or even imagine.

The words of the text are the conclusion to the answer to a question put to the spouse, viz., *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* She readily answers, by giving a particular description of his charming beauties and superlative excellence, by which he is distinguished from all others, the chief among ten thousands; and then sums up all in one word, by saying, *He is altogether lovely.* He has the highest beauty, excellence, and perfection, and has nothing else. Having thus given his character, she says, with reference to the question, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend.* This is the person, this is the character, with which I am so deeply in love; I am not ashamed to own him to be the beloved of my soul; and this is my best friend, whose heart is set on me, and he loves me as much as I can desire.

The mutual love and friendship between Christ and the believer, you will observe, is expressed here. The true Christian has set his love on Christ; he is his beloved; he has given his heart to him, as to one who is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely; and Christ loves him most tenderly, in the character of a true, faithful, and all-sufficient friend and patron, and so returns love for love.

The words do then lead us to attend to Christ, as he is here pointed out, in the character of the beloved friend of his people, the redeemed from among men.

It may be said, in general, that Christ, the glorious head and husband of his church, has every thing in him that can possibly come into the character of the best friend, and that to an inconceivable and infinite degree, and there is nothing belongs to him but what serves to complete and perfect this character; yea, he is at an infinite distance from every thing else; and his relation to his people, and all his conduct towards them, are such, and such are all the circumstances of this friendship, as to conspire to make it the most sweet, ravishing, noble, and exalted that in the nature of things can be, and render him in the highest possible degree a desirable, worthy, and excellent friend.

But, for the better illustration of this point, the following particulars may be attended to: —

1. He is the most able friend, even an omnipotent and all-sufficient one. He can do whatever he pleases. He has a sufficiency of power and wisdom in all possible cases, and is perfectly able to do for his friends, who love and trust in him, whatever they need or can possibly want to have done. All other friends are deficient in this respect: though they may have some sufficiency and ability to do some things for us, yet it is but infinitely little they can do, compared with what we

want to have done. We are infinitely needy, and must be eternally most miserable and wretched, unless we have some friend to help us who is fully able to go through with the work, and do all we want to have done, even in the most extreme, and, without such a friend, a desperate case. Now Christ is such a friend. He is understanding and wise perfectly to know what our case is, and what we want, and what is the wisest and best way to afford relief and supply all our wants, and he has full power to do whatever his wisdom dictates; and in this respect he is distinguished from all other persons in the universe; none but he was able to befriend us in the case in which we are. This will more fully appear before we have done.

2. He has the heart of a friend in all respects and to the most perfect degree; or, he is willing and fully engaged to do all he can do for his people — all they can possibly want to have done in any case, and at any time. All other friends fail here. Though they are able to do but little for their friends comparatively, yet they have not goodness enough to do all they can, in all cases and at all times. They have not the heart of a friend to perfection, so are not friendly to the utmost of their power at all times, but may be very unfriendly in some instances; therefore, cannot be relied upon without caution and danger of being disappointed. But Christ has the heart of a friend to infinite perfection, so that he can be relied upon in all cases, without any limits or danger. His benevolence to his people is without any bounds, and sufficient to surmount the greatest difficulties in the way of their good, and prompt him to do things infinitely great for them, and bestow on them the best and the greatest good, however unworthy and ill deserving they are, and however criminal and vile their conduct has been towards him, in the most aggravated and horrid abuse of his goodness.

3. He is a friend on whom we are dependent, and to whom we are indebted and beholden in the highest possible degree. This gives great advantage to love and friendship, where the friends and lovers are not equal, but one superior to the other, and the others benefactor and savior to such a degree as to lay his friend under the greatest obligations to love and gratitude; and the greater this dependence is, and the more one friend has received from, and is indebted to, another in this way, the more sweet and happy is the love and friendship between them. It is, indeed, contrary to pride, and a heart that is not formed for true friendship, to be thus united to such a superior as a friend, and to be thus dependent upon, and wholly indebted and beholden to, him for every thing. But it is not so, but

directly the contrary, with the truly humble sinner: that friend will be most agreeable to such a one on whom he is most dependent, and to whom he is in the highest degree obliged; and we cannot form an idea of any other two friends so happy as these, when this is the case to the highest possible degree, or conceive of any friendship so great, advantageous, and sweet as this. It seems, indeed, to belong to the nature of true creature friendship even to desire and delight in this circumstance, viz., to be greatly indebted and beholden to the friend we esteem and love; the greater obligations we are under to him, the better pleased we are, and the more sweet is the love and friendship. This seems to be owing to two things especially; one is, that hereby we have a clear and striking evidence of our friend's love to us, which must give sweetness and enjoyment in proportion to our love to him. The other is, that hereby we are led to feel and exercise a love of gratitude, which is peculiarly sweet in proportion to the love of esteem, benevolence, and complacency we have for our friend. In this view, the more we are obliged the better, and the greater satisfaction and sweetness we have in the friendship. And, on the other hand, the more the other has done for the obliged friend, and the greater benefactor he has been to him, the higher enjoyment and happiness he has in proportion to his benevolence and love to him.

Hence it is, that where persons have undertaken to represent the highest and most affecting instances of true love and friendship, and the greatest degree of enjoyment and happiness in such friendship, and exhibit this to the best advantage in a feigned story or romance, they have formed a history of some one of a high and excellent character, and of a generous, benevolent spirit, setting his heart on one in a mean, low, and miserable state and circumstances, to be his spouse. She is, for instance, taken captive by her enemies, and reduced to the greatest poverty and distress, and her life eminently exposed. He, in order to redeem and deliver her, and procure her for his bride and spouse, goes through a long series of self-denial and sufferings, is at great expense, and does great exploits, and exposes his life to an eminent degree, without which she must have perished in the hands of her cruel foes. And thus he delivers her by risking all that is dear to him in her behalf, and, in a sense, giving his own life for her; so that she entirely owes her life and all she has to him, and is under the greatest imaginable obligations to him. In this way he procures her for his spouse, and brings her into the nearest union to himself, and a foundation is laid for the greatest happiness in each other, in the enjoyment of the most sweet love and friendship,

every way to an unspeakably greater degree than could have been in different circumstances, or in any other way, in which she would not have been so much dependent upon, and so greatly obliged to, him.

This is but a faint shadow of the case before us with respect to Christ, the friend and bridegroom of his church and people. They are fallen into an infinitely calamitous and evil state, — a state of complete, total, and eternal destruction, — into the hands of the devil, their great and potent enemy, and under the displeasure and curse of the God that made them, being infinitely guilty and ill deserving, the prisoners of justice, bound over to suffer his eternal wrath, not being able or disposed to help and deliver themselves in the least degree. The Son of God was the only person in the universe that was able to redeem and save them; and he was not under the least obligation to do it. But he voluntarily offered himself, and undertook this most difficult, costly, and mighty work, and that from pure love and benevolence to these lost and infinitely miserable creatures, and a desire to procure and present to himself a glorious church, a bride not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but perfectly beautiful and holy, and without blemish, being brought into the nearest and everlasting union and friendship with himself.

In order to this, he gave himself for them. Though he was a person of infinite dignity, riches, and worth, he became poor, and humbled himself so as to become a servant, and subjected himself to the greatest ignominy and sufferings, even unto death. He voluntarily put himself into the place and circumstances of his spouse; and when her whole interest lay at stake, and she was in a state of complete destruction, he took the whole of her destruction and sufferings on himself, and went through with the matter; he drank the whole of the bitter cup, that she might escape; he gave his life for her ransom, and spilt his own blood in the most trying circumstances, that he might completely redeem her from the jaws of the most dreadful and eternal destruction, and deliver her from the hand and power of all her enemies. He has survived the dreadful scene, having completed the greatest and most difficult work that ever was, or ever will, or can be undertaken, and yet lives to espouse the cause of his people, and will not stop till he has completed the matter, and sanctified and cleansed every one of them with the washing of water by the word, and brought them into the most near and everlasting union and friendship with himself, in the most perfect enjoyment of his love, riches, honors, and happiness forever and ever.

Thus the redeemed have a friend, not only in himself most

excellent and worthy, and full of the greatest benevolence and goodness, but one on whom they are in the highest degree dependent, and to whom they are indebted and obliged in the highest imaginable or even possible degree, in a manner which is most pleasing to them, and serves to render him unspeakably more excellent and worthy in their eyes, and give a sweetness to their love and friendship which could not be known in any other circumstances.

No other creatures in the universe have such a friend as this. The angels have no such friend. When some of them fell into sin and woe, they had no friend to redeem them; and the redeemed from among men have had infinitely more done for them, and they are infinitely more dependent on the Son of God for all good and happiness, and indebted and obliged to him, than the angels are. They are the bride, the Lamb's wife, who are by him redeemed out of great tribulation from a state of infinite woe, in which they lay perfectly helpless, that he might enjoy them forever in a peculiar union and friendship, which exceeds every thing of this kind in all possible degrees. These circumstances lay a foundation for a sweetness and enjoyment immensely higher than could take place in any other way. In a sense and acknowledgment of what Christ has done for them, and their peculiar dependence upon, and obligations to him, the redeemed will exercise a kind of humble, sweet, and beautiful love towards their Friend and Redeemer, which is peculiar to them, and never could have had an existence in any other way but this; and which will be the eternal source of a most sweet and high enjoyment, which no stranger, none but the beloved bride, not even the angels, can intermeddle with or taste. In the exercise of this peculiarly sweet love and friendship towards their infinitely dear and glorious Friend and Redeemer, they will eternally sing a new song, which none but the redeemed, the bride, the Lamb's wife, can possibly sing or learn, to all eternity, — no, not even the highest and best angel in heaven, saying, — "Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests unto God." Well, then, may they now begin to say, with a heartfelt sweetness and joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, "This is my beloved, and this is my *friend*."

4. Jesus Christ is a friend who has exercised the highest degrees of love, and has given the greatest possible testimonies of it.

In order to true friendship, there must be mutual love. This is essential to the character of our friend, that he loves us;

and he acts in this character, and maintains friendship, by exercising love, and giving proper tokens and manifestations of it, on all occasions. Solomon observes, that "a friend loveth at all times." And he is the greatest friend whose love is the strongest, and is exercised and manifested in the most difficult and trying circumstances.

Now, Christ has distinguished himself from all others in this respect, and has discovered himself to be infinitely the greatest and best friend. This appears from what was said under the last particular of what Christ has done and suffered for his spouse; for in all this he exercised and expressed his love, and that in the most trying circumstances, and to the highest possible degree. One thing that recommends a friend, and adds to his worth and excellence, and makes him dear to his beloved, is, that he is a tried friend; he has persevered in his friendship, and exercised and expressed his love, in the most difficult case imaginable; in doing which he has been at the greatest pains and cost, while he had the greatest temptations to give up his beloved. Jesus Christ is such a tried friend, and that to the greatest possible degree.

"Greater love hath no man," says this greatest and chief of all friends, "than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But Christ's love and friendship has infinitely exceeded this. He has done and suffered more for his people than merely dying for them, a thousand times over. He drank the bitter cup for them, which was infinitely more than merely dying a violent death. He was made a curse for them, and suffered a sense of the wrath of God. This drank up his spirits; the foretaste of it threw him into the most amazing agony; and this made him cry out, in inexpressible and most astonishing anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What is the most cruel death that ever martyr suffered to this? The martyrs have been able to rejoice in the midst of all the keenest tortures enemies could inflict. They have sung in the flames, and found it the most happy, joyful hour they ever saw; and so might Christ have done on the cross, had he but their supports, and no more to suffer than they. But what he suffered in his death was something infinitely greater and more terrible. Under this infinite weight he hung on the cross, and at last bowed his head and gave up the ghost. This was dying in a sense and degree in which no other person ever did. To die thus was infinitely more, and greater, and more dreadful than the death of all the ten thousand martyrs who have fallen a sacrifice to the cruelty of their bloody persecutors. Yea, it was as great a thing and equivalent to the eternal death and destruction which the redeemed

deserve and were exposed to, for he died in their stead; he took their death and eternal destruction on himself. On him it fell in its full weight, and he bore and went through it all. He knew what it would cost him to espouse the cause of sinners; yet he voluntarily undertook, put himself in their circumstances, (sin only excepted,) and went through with it without flinching in the least degree. Here is an instance of love and friendship, to which there neither is, nor can be, any parallel in the universe. This is the evidence and token of love which Christ has given to his people, which is infinitely the greatest that ever was, or can be.

Besides, the love of Christ to his people will appear yet greater, if we consider their native character and disposition towards him. He loved them, and died for them, when they were not only mean, worthless, unworthy, and infinitely guilty, but his enemies, disposed to hate, despise, and oppose him, in his whole character and in all his ways, and even in his most astonishing works of love and kindness to them. Herein he has commended his love to us, in that, when we were his great and inexcusable enemies, he died for us. It is a much higher exercise of love, and a greater testimony of it, to love and die for an enemy, a base, odious, injurious creature, than it would be to do this for an excellent, benevolent, and much-esteemed friend.

What higher evidence and testimony could Christ give of his love of benevolence to those whom he redeems than this? and what higher act of love and friendship can there be? Surely his love to his people cannot be doubted of. And if he thus loved them when they were his vile enemies, he will continue to love them now they are reconciled, and have chosen him for their best friend and patron; and this is an exercise and evidence of a strong and wonderful love, that will unspeakably endear him to them, and add an inexpressible sweetness to this friendship forever.

And, as the effect and further evidence of this love, he gives them his Holy Spirit to change their hearts, deliver them from the dominion of sin and the slavery to Satan, in which they naturally are, and implant lasting principles of holiness and love to him, by which their hearts are purified, and unite themselves to him with the most perfect bond and union of love and friendship. This is another pledge of his great, everlasting, and unchangeable love to them; and the saints in this world, so far as they have the evidence that they are the subjects of such a work of grace, may well rejoice, and with unspeakably sweet delight give praise "unto Him that has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood." What

wonderful, sovereign love and grace is this, which overtakes and falls upon the guilty, sinful wretch, while in his full career to hell, running on in the most daring, mad opposition to Christ, and contempt of him, without the least disposition to hearken to the voice of wisdom, and turn at his reproof! Every true Christian ascribes all this to Christ, and is so affected with his preventing, sovereign love and grace, herein exercised and manifested, as to taste an unspeakable sweetness in it. With what sweet delight does he often say, "If I have the least degree of love to Christ, and a heart to know, submit to, and trust in him, this is the effect of his eternal preventing, sovereign love and grace, which alone has made the difference between me and those who run on in their mad course to hell! Not unto me, not unto me, but to thy wonderful, distinguishing love and grace, be all the glory!"

It may be also observed here, that Christ has given them his Spirit, by which they are sealed to the day of redemption, and as the pledge and earnest of their eternal inheritance, so a pledge and token of his unchangeable, everlasting love to them. He has, indeed, given himself and all things to them; he has made them heirs of the whole universe. He has made, and is doing, all things for their sakes. He says to his church of redeemed ones, "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." (Isa. xliii. 3, 4.) Surely Christ shows the greatest love imaginable to his people, since he gives them all he has to give, and withholds no one good thing from them. Now, the more love he has to his people, and the higher and more clear evidence he gives of it, so much the more excellent and valuable friend he is to them; and their happiness in him as a friend will be in proportion to this. How infinitely distinguished, in this respect, is Christ from all other friends! Well may the Christian say, "This is my beloved, and this is *my friend*."

5. Jesus Christ, the Christian's friend, is a person of infinite dignity, worth, and excellence. He has all this to the highest possible perfection and extent, so that no imagination can possibly exceed it. This, his true dignity, worth, and excellence, in himself considered, infinitely heightens his character and worth as a friend, and lays a foundation for the most sweet, exalted, and growing happiness in his love and friendship to all eternity. He who has no true worth and excellence cannot be justly valued and delighted in at all as a friend, and there is no foundation for a happy friendship with

such a one. Worth and excellence, therefore, come into the essence of the character of a friend; and the more any one has of this, the more is he to be prized as a friend, and the greater happiness is to be enjoyed in his love and friendship. A friend gives himself to his beloved; so that the more dignity, worth, and excellence he has, the more he gives to the person he admits into union and friendship with him. Therefore, the more worth and excellence any person has, the more we naturally and justly prize his love and friendship, and the more sweetness and pleasure we have in it. We prize and delight in the love of another in proportion to our esteem of him, and the sense we have of his true excellence, dignity, and worthiness. How much better is it to us to be the objects of the love of some dignified personage, who appears to us to have all the excellence and attracting charms of human nature, and to have him our friend, than to have the love and friendship of one who is in our eyes absolutely worthless and contemptible! I need not, therefore, yea, I cannot, say of how much advantage the dignity and excellence of Christ is in this friendship, in this view. The higher the Christian rises in his esteem of Christ, the more he sees of his dignity and excellence, the more pleased and delighted he will necessarily be in being the object of his embraces and love. Surely, then, he had rather, in this view, be beloved by Christ than by all the world besides; and nothing can fill his breast with such overflowing delight as to be able to say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend." And this lays a foundation for esteem and complacency, without which there can be no happy friendship; and the higher this rises, the more happiness and enjoyment there is in a friend. Christ, in this respect, is distinguished from all other persons in the universe as the best friend, in union and love to whom there may be the highest happiness. We are in ourselves so mean and low, and of such little worth, that we cannot enjoy friendship to the best advantage with those who are our equals. The more dignified and excellent our friend is, and the more distinguished he is from us, and the more above us in this respect, the more happy shall we necessarily be in his love and friendship. In Christ, therefore, believers have all that can be desired in a friend in this respect. In him they have an inexhaustible fund for high and growing enjoyment, and, in a sense of his dignity and excellence, their ravished hearts will swell with ecstatic delight, while they feel and say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

6. Jesus Christ is the most condescending, familiar friend.

Where there is a great imparity in two friends, the one very

high, honorable, and worthy, and the other mean and low, it is inconsistent with the most sweet and happy friendship, unless he who is dignified and exalted, and is every way so much superior to the other, knows how, and is disposed, to exercise condescension equal to his true dignity and worth, so as to practise as great familiarity and intimacy with his friend who is so much beneath him as if he were his equal. But where this is the case, the great superiority of one to the other gives a great advantage to the friendship, and renders it more sweet and happy to the inferior, so that the more worthy and exalted his friend is, the higher enjoyment he has in the friendship. This imparity in station and dignity is commonly in the way of the enjoyment of true friendship among men in this world, because the great and exalted know not how to condescend and stoop to the mean and low in a manner and degree that is in such a case necessary, but are disposed to keep themselves at a distance.

But Christ is, in this respect, the most excellent friend; for his condescension and humility are equal to his high exaltation and dignity, and he admits his friends, however mean, unworthy, and despicable they are in themselves, to as great familiarity and intimacy as if he were but their equal; so that his superiority and dignity give great advantage to the friendship in this respect.

And here it is of importance to observe, that his incarnation, or union to the human nature, by which he is a real man, even Immanuel, God with us, is of infinite advantage with respect to this. God is infinitely the best friend; but it is impossible he should communicate himself to creatures, and become their condescending, familiar friend in any other way so well, and to so great advantage, as by uniting himself to their nature so as to become one of them. In this view, as well as on many other accounts, the incarnation of the Son of God is a most wise and gracious contrivance, as it is adapted, in the highest possible degree, to promote the happiness of creatures, especially of the redeemed, in the love and enjoyment of God. God hereby comes down to creatures in a way and manner suited to their nature and capacity, and discovers and communicates himself to them to the greatest possible advantage; and there is a foundation laid for that condescension to men, and intimate love and friendly familiarity between Christ and his people, which could not have been in any other way. The most high God is become a man, a most meek, humble, condescending man, able and disposed to take his people into the most intimate union and familiarity, while this man has all the dignity and honor of divinity. Thus the man Christ

Jesus will eternally be the medium of a kind and degree of communication of the Deity to creatures, which could be in no other way, and which is every way adapted to raise them up and make them happy; and the redeemed have a most condescending, intimate friend in the person of Christ, who is both God and man, who cannot be equalled by any other person in the universe, and in union and friendship with whom they have the highest enjoyment and happiness.

The condescension of Christ, as a most tender, intimate, and familiar friend, is truly wonderful, and has not, nor ever will have, any parallel in the universe. This he practised in a manner and degree truly astonishing, towards his friends and disciples, when he was on earth. He condescended to their weakness, and adapted himself in his instructions to their low, childish way of conceiving of things, and meekly bore with their stupidity and unteachable perverseness. He dwelt with them night and day, and admitted them to embrace and kiss him from time to time. We may look on this as an image and specimen of the condescension and familiarity with which he treats his people at all times. Though he is now exalted in the highest heavens, and has taken the throne of the universe, and rules over all, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him, yet this has not lifted him up in any degree so as to dispose him to keep at a greater distance from his people; but he practises as much condescension towards the meanest of them, and receives them to as great a nearness and familiarity, as ever he did in his state of humiliation. His condescension and goodness in this respect infinitely exceed that of any other friend, and is equal to his exaltation, greatness, and dignity. In this he excels all other friends as much as he does in honor and dignity.

No other friend is so easy of access as he. His friends are welcome to him at all times; yea, he is always present with them, so that they may converse with him whenever they please, in the most intimate, familiar manner, without keeping the least distance, and without any reserve. He is all attention to them whenever they turn their thoughts with their hearts towards him; and nothing can divert him from conversing with them, or interrupt the correspondence, but their withdrawing themselves or turning away from him. He is ready to meet them and attend upon them at what time and place they please; yea, he calls after them, and invites them to look towards him, and speak to him. He says to each one of his friends, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Behold, he stands at the door of every one, and knocks; and

whoever opens to him he comes in and sups with them, and they with him.

And here it is worthy of special remark, that their meanness, unworthiness, and past ill treatment of him is not in the least in the way of this his condescending goodness and kindness. He has no disposition to retaliate for their folly and ingratitude, and keep them at a distance for this; he is as condescending and kind to the meanest and most unworthy and guilty as to any whatsoever; and while he thus condescends, and is good and kind to them, in the most liberal manner, he does not upbraid them for their past follies, or because they are so much beholden to him. He gives most bountifully, and with the greatest liberality, and upbraideth not.

And he is not, nor ever will be, ashamed of any of his people who have united themselves to him as their chosen friend, however mean and despicable in themselves; but he will appear as their friend at all times, and in the most public manner, and own them to be his friends, and confess their names before his Father and before his angels. Yea, he is so far from being ashamed of them, that he looks on them as an honor to him. They are unto him "a crown of glory and a royal diadem" in the hand of this their condescending friend; they are unto him "for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory," as the bride is the ornament and glory of her husband. Such a friend as this has every true Christian, in which he is infinitely distinguished from all other friends; who is most exactly suited to the circumstances of the redeemed from among men, and to raise their happiness in friendship with him to the highest key. But I have yet many other things to say of this most excellent and blessed Friend.

7. By all his condescension, love, and kindness towards sinners, and entering into the nearest and dearest friendship with them, he does not degrade himself in the least, nor lose any degree of his true dignity, worth, and excellence, but has greatly honored himself hereby.

This is a very important and essential article in this friendship; for if this were not true, it would be a very unhappy union, and no good could come of it, either to Christ or those on whom he sets his love. If this were a dishonorable friendship on Christ's part, he would by this lose his merit and worthiness in the sight of the Father; so could be of no avail to recommend the sinner on whom he sets his love, of which he stands in infinite need, and without which he cannot be happy in the favor of God; which will be more particularly considered under the next head.

The Jews attempted to reproach our Lord, and cast an

odium upon him, by saying that he was a friend of publicans and sinners. If he had been so in the sense they meant, it would have been indeed a reproach and disgrace to him. If he had been their friend in a sense which did imply the least degree of love and approbation of their character as sinners, and if he had espoused their cause in this view, and under the least influence of this, he would so far degrade himself, and render himself and his love worthless, odious, and despicable, in the sight of all holy, worthy beings. This, therefore, would have wholly spoilt his character as the almighty Friend and Redeemer of sinners. But Jesus Christ is infinitely far from this. Though he is the friend of sinners, has espoused their cause, and befriended them as no other person ever did or could, yet he has not hereby appeared in the least degree a friend to sin, but the contrary to an infinite degree. He has befriended sinners consistent with the most perfect and even infinite hatred of sin, and so of their character as sinners, and so as to manifest his hatred and abhorrence of them to the highest possible degree. In his highest act of love and friendship to sinners, he did in the highest possible degree, and in the most public, convincing, striking manner, justify the divine character and law which the sinner had opposed and contemned, and condemn the sinner. The highest angel in heaven cannot conceive to this day, and never will to all eternity, how Christ could have condemned sin more effectually, and set the sinner in a worse and more odious light, and showed his love of holiness and hatred of sin more fully, than he did when he died on the cross. In this he did in the highest possible degree justify God in threatening and cursing the sinner, and being disposed to punish him forever, while he voluntarily took that punishment on himself, that the sinner might escape.

In Christ, then, are united the greatest friend to God and his law, and to the cause and interest of holiness, that ever was known in the universe, and at the same time the greatest friend of the sinner. These two seeming contraries are united in the same person and character, and expressed in the most perfect manner, and to the highest degree, in the same conduct. Therefore, when Christ stooped the lowest, and condescended the most to befriend sinners, he did, in the highest degree and most effectual manner, espouse the cause of God in opposition to the sinner, and appeared in his greatest excellency, and was most worthy and meritorious in God's sight. How these two could be united in the same person and the same act, was far above the wisdom of angels; and herein, in a special manner, is Christ the wisdom of God.

Well may the Christian boast and say, "This is my friend," who is also the greatest friend to the supreme Lawgiver of the universe, and has so become my friend, and stooped to espouse my cause, and taken me into the nearest and dearest relation to himself, as at the same time to maintain and express his dignity, worthiness, and excellency, and merit infinitely in the sight of the Father. This leads to another particular.

8. Christ improves all his worth and excellence in the behalf and for the benefit of his people. It is all theirs, and improved to their advantage, in the best manner and to the highest degree; so that it is in effect all given away to them, being most effectually, and to the best purpose, placed to their account.

Sinners want such a friend; and no other person could befriend them, to any purpose to himself or to them, but one who is infinitely excellent and worthy. They being infinitely hateful, guilty, and ill deserving in themselves, and having nothing by which they can abate their ill desert and render themselves a whit the more deserving and acceptable on its own account, they must be eternally hated and cursed, unless they have something to recommend them which is not in themselves, but in some other; and this must be something infinitely valuable and excellent, or it can in no measure or degree countervail their odiousness and ill desert so as in the least to recommend them to their offended Lawgiver and Sovereign. And it will not become him to forgive them and show them any favor, unless they have something to recommend them, and repair the dishonor they have done him by violating his law and despising his character and government. Therefore, unless some one did espouse their cause and undertake for them who has worthiness and merit enough to restore the honor of God's broken law, and effectually recommend sinners to their offended Sovereign by interposing his own worthiness in their behalf, they must be the objects of his displeasure and wrath forever, as what is most fit and right.

Now, Christ is the only person in the universe who was able effectually to espouse their cause in this respect and act the part of a friend to them. He has worthiness and merit enough in the eyes of the offended Deity effectually to procure pardon and favor for the sinner, if properly interposed in his behalf, so that it might be fit to reckon it to his account. And this Christ has done in the most fit and proper manner. He has put himself in the sinner's stead, has borne the curse he lay under, and paid the greatest honors to the divine law and character, which is so pleasing and acceptable to the Majesty of Heaven that he is ready to pardon and bless any one who is a friend to

Christ, and trusts in his merit and worthiness alone to recommend him.

Christ repeatedly spoke of this to his disciples in the most express manner, and told them that their love and union of heart to him did effectually recommend them to the Father, and interest them in his love and favor, to as great a degree as they needed or could desire. His words are, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

We cannot reasonably suppose that Christ means to declare in these words that their love and friendship to him did on its own account, or because of the excellency and worth of it in itself considered, recommend them to the Father, and procure his love and favor to them, as a testimony of his well-pleasedness with their persons and love, considered as by themselves, and separate from Christ. We cannot understand our Savior thus in these words, for this would set them in direct contradiction to the whole New Testament, which teaches us that sinners are pardoned, and received to the favor and love of the Father, purely out of respect to Christ, to his righteousness and worthiness, which alone recommends them to him, and not any exercises and works of their own. But his meaning must be, that the Father is so well pleased with him, and loves him so well, considered in the capacity of Mediator and a Friend of sinners, and his merit and worthiness in this character is so great in his sight, that he is ready to be well pleased with and love any sinner who unites himself to him in true love and friendship, and trusts in him in this relation and character. Such love and union to this friend is a sufficient ground and reason of the Father's loving him; and so the Father loves him because he loves and is united to his Son, who is infinitely honorable and worthy in his sight, and is infinitely near and dear to him; and who has done and suffered so much in the behalf of the sinner, that his merit and worth might be improved for his benefit, in which he has honored the Father, and in the most excellent way and manner possible, and to the greatest advantage, employed all the interest he has with the Father to procure his love and favor to the sinner who is thus united to him. The Father loves his Son so well, he is a person of such infinite dignity and worthiness, and has exercised such a high degree of virtue, and has honored him so much in what he has done and suffered for sinners, improving all his merit with the Father in their behalf, that nothing is wanting

but the sinner's loving him and trusting in him in this character, so uniting himself to him as his true friend, in order to the Father's loving him. The Father has such love to his Son, and the Son stands in such a relation to sinners, that the sinner who loves the Son is necessarily beloved by the Father, purely from the love he has to his Son, however odious, vile, and unworthy he is in himself; and thus the Father loves them because they love his Son, and can do no otherwise, unless he ceases to love his Son; for the love he has to his Son will necessarily operate so, and induce him to love those who love his Son, and to whom the Son is a friend, and acts as their friend before the Father, presenting his merit, and all he has done and suffered for his honor, desiring that this may be reckoned to them, and that they might have pardon and favor on his account. For the Father to withhold his love and favor from such is really to withhold his love and favor from his Son; and, therefore, if he love the latter, he will love the former, and there is no other possible supposition in the reason and nature of things.

And this view of the matter, by the way, may lead all the attentive to see what is the true meaning and import of the doctrine of the imputation of the merit and righteousness of Christ, for the pardon and justification of the sinner who believes in and cleaves to him in the character of a Mediator, and how reasonable it is, and agreeable to the nature of things.

If we have a friend who loves us, and there is a mutual friendship between us and him who we know has great favor and merit with one whom we have offended, and whose love and favor we want, and who is very dear to him and greatly beloved by him, we are naturally, and with the greatest reason, ready to trust in such a friend to procure for us the favor we want; and if the dignity and worthiness of our friend is sufficient, and his merit with the person we have offended is so great as to countervail our offence, and worthy of so great a favor as we want, and we know he is engaged to make the best use of his merit and worthiness in the eyes of that person to procure of him this favor, having exerted himself in all possible ways in our behalf, and so as greatly to please and honor him,—if we have such a friend, we may be sure of obtaining the favor we want, however unworthy we are, and how much soever we have offended this person, and though he has no disposition to show us the least favor on our own account, but considered as we are in ourselves, and unconnected with our friend, is disposed to hate, condemn, and destroy us, and in proportion to our love to our friend, and sense of his dignity and worthiness, and of the high virtue and excellence of what

he had done in our behalf, shall we have confidence of obtaining the favor we want, and with boldness approach the offended person in his name.

If a subject has incurred the just displeasure of his prince, and greatly wants his pardon and favor, how happy does he count himself if he has some great personage, his friend, who is near the prince and has great honor and favor with him! especially if he knows this great and honorable personage is ready to improve all the interest and influence he has with the prince in his behalf, and for this end has been at vast pains to make good the damage the prince had sustained by his crime, and render it honorable for him to grant the pardon and bestow the favor he wants. In such a case, we all know the criminal cannot fail of obtaining the pardon and favor he needs, if his friend at court has dignity, merit, and worthiness enough in the eyes of the prince to be worthy of such a favor. The prince's love to this personage will naturally and necessarily flow out to the person whose friend he is, and who loves him. And in this case we see the merit and worthiness of this great and excellent personage is imputed or transferred to the account of the unworthy criminal, to recommend him to that favor, and procure it for him, of which he is most unworthy in himself, and which it would have been utterly unfit and indecent for the prince to bestow upon him, had it not been for this his connection with this worthy person.

This is, in some degree, a parallel to the case before us. Jesus Christ, the Christian's friend, appears with such dignity and honor in the court of heaven, and has done such astonishingly great and wonderful exploits to secure the honor of the Almighty Sovereign and Lawgiver of heaven and earth, and render it consistent with his granting pardon and favor to sinners, and has so pleased and honored the Father, and is so dear and excellent in his eyes, that he is ready to love and show favor to any sinner who loves this worthy personage, and is a real and hearty friend to him, whose interest he espouses before the Father, and interposes all his merit in his behalf. This is quite sufficient to recommend the most guilty, ill deserving wretch on earth to all the favor that Heaven can bestow. He has no need to plead any thing but his relation and union to the Son of God, as his true and hearty friend; he wants nothing else to recommend him to the highest honors and happiness in God's kingdom forever. The Father of the universe will love him with a dear and everlasting love, and embrace him as his dear child, the friend of his well-beloved, his dearest Son. And all the angels will love, serve, and honor him forever, because he bears the character, and

stands in the relation, of a friend to the Son of God, and is one whose interest he has espoused, and whose name he will confess before the Father and before the angels.

Thus the Christian has a friend who is not only most worthy and excellent in his eyes, with whom his heart is pleased and charmed, but this excellence and worthiness is reckoned to his account, and is become his righteousness, by which he is recommended to pardon and favor with God; so that the supreme Majesty and Lawgiver of heaven and earth hereby becomes his eternal Friend and Father. Therefore, the higher sense the Christian has of Christ's excellency and worthiness, and the more he loves him, the more confidence, assurance, and joy will he naturally have in his merit and righteousness, and say, "In the Lord Jesus Christ have I righteousness; in him shall I, with all the seed of Israel, be justified, and in him only will I glory."

9. Christ is not only a friend who is full of good will and benevolence to his people, but he highly esteems them, and has great and most sweet complacency and delight in them.

This is abundantly represented in this Song. Christ often calls his spouse, the church, his *fair one;* and she is to him the fairest among women. His language to his church and to every true member of it is, "O my dove, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." "Behold! thou art fair, my love; behold! thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee."

There is something mysterious and wonderful in this — that Christ should thus esteem and delight in those who are in themselves, and in their natural state, so mean, despicable, vile, and odious. But this comes to pass by his putting his own beauty and excellence upon them, forming them after his own likeness, and receiving them into the nearest relation to himself, by which they become clothed with his righteousness and worthiness, and partake of his honor and fulness; so that in this near relation, and beautified and adorned with his own beauty and holiness, they are honorable in his eyes, and he takes great complacency and delight in them. And as he is continually purifying and adorning them more and more, and will go on to do it until not the least deformity, not so much

as spot or wrinkle, remains, and they are become most perfect beauties, so his complacency and delight in them is increasing, and is now greater in the view of what they shall soon be brought to, even the most consummate beauty and glory, like a king's daughter, all glorious within, and her clothing of wrought gold; and they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, the most beautiful, glorious bride of the Lamb.

Now, this adds an unspeakable value and sweetness to this friendship. In proportion as any one esteems, loves, and delights in another, he naturally, and even necessarily, desires to be the object of his esteem and complacency; and, consequently, this gives him a sweet enjoyment and happiness, so far as he has evidence that it takes place, and in a degree equal to his view and sense of the worthiness and excellency of his friend. How great, then, must be the happiness of the believer in his friendship with Christ, from this circumstance! He has the highest and growing esteem of his person and character, and is more and more ravished with his superlative beauty and excellence; and nothing can be more desirable and sweet to him than to have the approbation and love of this glorious, excellent personage, and nothing is wanting to complete his happiness but to know that he is the object of the complacency and sweet delight of his best-beloved and most-esteemed friend. The thought of this is most transporting to his soul; and the more he is persuaded and assured of this in this world, the more ineffable sweetness does he taste and enjoy in this friendship. What, then, will be the happiness of this exalted friendship, when the beloved saint shall be made to shine forth as the sun in the most perfect beauty, and shall behold the dignity, beauty, and excellence of his glorious Friend and Redeemer in the meridian brightness and splendor of his glory, and his heart shall glow with the highest and most perfect love of esteem and complacency towards him, while this his infinitely glorious and excellent Friend returns love for love in the most full and ample manner, and embraces him as his dearest and best beloved, giving him the greatest possible assurance that he takes unspeakable delight and satisfaction in him, and will do so to all eternity! This will raise the redeemed to heights of happiness, and sweet, ecstatic delight, beyond all conception, in the enjoyment of their exalted, most dear, and best-beloved Friend, while they find themselves embraced by him in the high exercises of sweet love and complacence, being perfectly pleased and ravished with their love, and, in the highest and most exalted sense, "his left hand is under their head, and his right hand doth embrace them." How will their hearts

swell with the thought, and be filled full, and even run over, with ineffable delight and joy, while they think, and with the greatest assurance say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend"!

And it is worthy of observation here, that their dependence on Christ for all their worthiness, beauty, and excellence, as they receive it all from him, by which they become the objects of his esteem and complacency, — they being wholly without any thing of this kind, and infinitely to the contrary of it, as he finds them, — this their dependence on him will greatly add to the sweetness and enjoyment while they find themselves thus esteemed and beloved by him; for it is unspeakably more desirable and sweet to become the objects of his love and complacency in this way than in any other.

The spouse who venerates, esteems, and loves her husband far above all others is happy in his embraces, and the tokens of his esteem, complacency, and delight in her, in proportion to her sense of his dignity, worthiness, and excellence; and if she has received all that which recommends her to him as the object of his peculiar esteem and delight from him, or some way by his means, this will greatly add to the sweetness of her enjoyment, in a sense of his great condescension and goodness, and her peculiar obligations to him. This is a faint emblem of the case before us; for these things take place in the friendship we are considering to an immensely greater degree, and in a far more exalted manner, than can be in any thing temporal and earthly.

And, by the way, it may be here observed, that the redeemed will have greatly the advantage of angels in their friendship with Christ in this particular. As Christ has been a greater friend to the redeemed than to angels, — has exercised immensely more benevolence and kindness, and done infinitely more for them, and so laid them under infinitely greater obligations to esteem, love, and honor him, — so he exercises a greater love of esteem, complacency, and delight towards them than the angels are the objects of, and that because he puts a peculiar and distinguishing beauty and dignity on them, of which the angels do not partake. As the king's bride, the queen, however mean her state was before she married him, is more honorable, and is much more the object of his esteem and complacency, and he takes much more delight and satisfaction in her than in any of the most dignified servants and greatest nobles of his court, however great and honorable they are in themselves, and she enjoys a peculiar sweetness in his love, and a much higher pleasure and happiness than any of them can do; so the bride, the Lamb's wife, is more happy in

the embraces and peculiar love of her glorious Friend and Husband, the King of the universe, and tastes more sweetness in a sense of his distinguished affection to her than the angels, those noble servants of the King of heaven, ever will or can do. Christ will eternally exercise and manifest a peculiar complacency and delight in them as their distinguished Friend and Redeemer; and this will be the source of a peculiar enjoyment and happiness, in which they will be distinguished from all other creatures in the love and embraces of such a friend as no others ever had or ever will have.

10. Christ is as much the friend of every individual, and the friendship between him and each one is as great, sweet, and happy, and every way to as great advantage, as if he was the friend of no other person; yea, much more so.

Herein this friendship differs from, and has the advantage of, all others. If the love and affection of other friends is divided among a great number, and they have one common friend in whose friendship they share, each one has a less share than if he was the only beloved; and if we have one friend whom we esteem and love much above all others, it seems most agreeable at least to have a peculiar and distinguished share in his affection, and to have him a friend to us in a sense and degree in which he is not to any other; so that a partner or rival in his affections and friendship is rather undesirable than pleasing, and tends to give an alloy to the friendship rather than a sweetness. This is in a peculiar manner so in love and friendship between the sexes. The bride or spouse is jealous of any rival in the affection of her husband; she is contented with nothing short of having the whole of his love and affection centring in her; she naturally monopolizes it to herself exclusively, and cannot bear to have any one share with her in this friendship; and if this should be the case, it will spoil the friendship for her, and the more she loves him, the more unhappy and miserable she is.

And this, by the way, is a very strong and striking evidence, among many others, that this Song, in which the text is found, is not a common love song, as in this respect it is formed on a plan contrary to the nature of common love and friendship between the sexes, or the bride and her lover, and which is only suited to the case before us. The beloved spouse is in this Song represented not as a single person, but as a company or society of persons united in seeking and setting their affections on one person as their common friend and lover. The spouse seeks company in her love to the bridegroom, and endeavors to draw other women to join with her in loving him, and speaks of others being united with her

in this with approbation and pleasure. "Therefore, the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine; the upright love thee." "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his garden," etc. "Thou that dwelleth in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice." This is a very unnatural representation for a woman to make with relation to her beloved friend, with whom she is seeking a union and friendship, in which a companion or rival would be most disagreeable. But it is perfectly agreeable to the case before us; for the spouse of Christ is not a single person, but a company or society united together in the same love and affection to one common friend, lover, and husband; and every individual believer or friend of Christ is so far from monopolizing his love, and desiring to be the only object of it, that it is a great addition to the sweetness and happiness of this friendship that others join with him in the same love, and equally share in the love and friendship of this glorious friend and bridegroom. Each one enjoys as much of Christ's love, has as full and large a share in his heart, and enjoys him every way as much as if he had no other lover and friend in the universe; so that, however great the number is on whom Christ sets his heart, this does not in any degree lessen the privilege and enjoyment of any individual; for he, their common friend, has an inexhaustible, infinite fulness, and is just as much, and all that, to each single one as if he was the only object of his love. Therefore, the more love and benevolence the believer has to Christ, and the higher the friendship rises, the more pleased will he be to have him esteemed and beloved by others, and the more happiness and joy will he have that others share with him in the blessings of this friendship, in proportion to his benevolence to them and delight in their welfare, which will always keep pace with his love to Christ and delight in him as the best and most glorious friend; so that every true friend of Christ is effectually formed and prepared to enjoy a peculiar pleasure and happiness in a happy and beautiful society, who are equally devoted to this same friendship, and share equally with him in the sweet love and affection of his dearest and most exalted friend. This leads to another particular.

II. This friendship between Christ and the true Christian lays the best foundation for union of heart, and sweet, exalted friendship with others.

Christ is the grand medium of all union and friendship in

the universe. In this respect all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, are gathered together in *one*, in Christ. Christ has reconciled the angels to men, and made them, who otherwise must have been their eternal enemies, great friends to them, and willing to devote themselves to the most friendly offices and acts towards the heirs of salvation, and spend their whole time and exert all their powers, in acts of kindness, in the most benevolent, friendly manner, ministering to them; and angels and the redeemed from among men shall finally be brought by Christ to dwell together forever, united in the most friendly, loving society. And he has not only reconciled God to men, and laid a foundation for their reconciliation and union with him, but has opened a way, and made full provision, for reconciling men one to another, and uniting them in the most dear and happy union and friendship, which in many respects surpasses all that there was any foundation for in man's primitive state of innocency. Sin has broken all bonds of true union and friendship among men, has set them at variance one with another, and introduced a most unhappy and horrible jar and discord; so that the true character of man in his natural state is, "living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Thus all true friendship has fled from the earth upon the apostasy of man, and that which is most directly contrary to this took place to a most awful degree; and man must have remained in this state of hatred and enmity one with another forever, had not Jesus Christ undertaken in his behalf. He has taken a most wise and effectual method to bring them to a union, love, and friendship one with another, at the same time that they are united to him and become his friends — a union and friendship which is unspeakably dear and sweet, and immensely surpasses all other friendships, except that which is between Christ and them. This friendship has its foundation in love to Christ, and union of heart to him, and is not really any thing distinct and separate from this. The believer's love to Christ, and love and friendship to his fellow-saints, or all that are united to Christ in the same love and friendship, is really one and the same undivided flame of love and affection, so that the same bond of love which unites their hearts to Christ does also, at the same time, unite them to each other; and the higher their love and friendship to Christ rises, and the stronger the exercises of it are, the more sweet and perfect is their love and friendship one to another: and this, their love to each other, is really love to Christ; it is the same affection, exercised and expressed in this way. This is represented in this light by Christ himself, when he tells us in what a light this matter will be set at

the day of judgment. "And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." If the acts of love and kindness which Christians do one towards another are really done to Christ, and are acts of love to him, then the whole of the love and friendship between them, of which these outward acts are the testimony and fruit, is really the same thing with love to Christ. This is the great and peculiar happiness of this Christian friendship, and renders it a most refined, exalted, and even divine friendship, and brings them into that sweet union and peculiar oneness for which their great Friend and Patron once prayed. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be *one* in us."

The believer's love to Christ, in a sense of his superlative beauty, excellence, and worthiness, naturally, and even necessarily, leads him to love and delight in all those who are in any degree conformed to him and bear his image and likeness; for this is not a different thing from loving Christ himself, as this likeness or image of Christ is Christ himself formed and living in them; and this likeness to Christ will be more especially lovely and charming to the friend of Christ if it consists summarily in love to Christ, in a high esteem of him, and true benevolence and affection to him, which is the case here; for the more any one loves and esteems Christ, the more desirous he will be that others shall love and esteem him, and the more pleased and gratified he will be with the love and esteem which others exercise towards him, and the more will he love and esteem them, and be more benevolent towards them. He whose heart is full of benevolence and good will to Christ must be pleased with, and delight in, the friendly benevolence of others to him, and this will also excite a peculiar benevolence and good will to such.

Besides, in proportion to the love any one has to Christ, he will have an affection for those who are beloved by Christ; so that Christ's love of benevolence and complacency to his people has great influence in uniting them to one another in the dearest love and affection. He who greatly loves a dear friend will naturally love all that are friendly to him and all to whom he is a friend. His being a friend to them will necessarily recommend them to him, and render them the objects of his complacency and benevolence. This takes place in the case before us in the most happy manner, and to the highest degree. In this view and to this purpose it is that Christ

proposes his own example of love to his disciples, as a motive and inducement to them to love one another with that love and friendship which is peculiar to Christians, as he knew it would have the most powerful influence upon them. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." No other society of friends have such a powerful motive to love one another as this which Christ sets before his disciples. He has loved them so as to give his life for them, and he has made their interest his own to all intents and purposes, and they are dear to him, and precious in his sight, answerable to what he has done and suffered for them. If, therefore, they love him, if he is honorable and precious in their sight, and they are friends to his interest, they certainly will love those who are so dear to him and have such an interest in his affections. How greatly does this recommend Christians one to another, and render them dear and precious in each other's eyes, and promote a sweet and noble friendship, which is known to no other person in the universe!

And it may be further observed, that this sweet, humble, Christian love, which is the image of Christ's love and grace, serves further to endear Christians to each other, and increase and heighten their friendship to each other; for there is a peculiar and inexpressible sweetness and enjoyment in being beloved by those who are so amiable and honorable in our eyes, and with such an ardent, humble, sweet, and pure affection as Christian love is. The Christian who has a sensible and most pleasing idea of this love and affection cannot feel himself embraced by others with this tender, beautiful, noble love and friendship without an ineffable sensation, which fills his heart with the most sweet delight and joy, and kindles a flame in his soul of holy love and gratitude to them, in which he returns love for love, and embraces them with the arms of the most delightful, tender, and heart-melting friendship. Thus the mutual love of Christians serves to sweeten and increase their affection to each other, and blows the coals and kindles up the fire of friendship to a more intense and vehement flame. The more sensible any one is that he is the object of the Christian love of another whom he esteems highly as an amiable disciple of Christ, and the more evidences and tokens he has of this love, the more will his heart be inflamed in love to him, which again will increase and heighten the other's love; and thus, by the influence of their mutual love and friendship, the sweet flame rises higher and higher, until they are all melted and dissolved, and turned into a most pure, active, perfect flame, like two brands on fire, which burn slow, and give but a moderate heat when apart, but being put

together, by the mutual action and influence one on the other, the heat increases into a burning flame, which soon sets them all on fire.

Again: their being united in the belief of the same system of sweet, important truth, and engaged in the same common interest, and in the same pursuits, and having the same views, designs, temper, and disposition, and being, as to substance, in the same state and circumstances, — in all these respects, and many others, being alike, united and bearing a resemblance to each other, like the children of one family, united under one kind, wise friend and father, — Christians being thus united, and bearing this likeness to each other in so many respects, is many ways a great advantage to this friendship, and greatly adds to its beauty and sweetness, and serves to increase their love and the union of their hearts to each other.

As this is such a pleasant, delightful, as well as noble, important theme, in which every Christian has so much concern and experience, it is proper and pleasing to add a few words more, and descend into some particulars.

This friendship which Christians have one with another, by virtue of their union and friendship with Christ, the greatest and best friend, and the fountain and source of all true friendship among men, — this love and friendship has true humility as its foundation and basis, and its peculiar beauty and glory. Pride is most contrary to true friendship, and always interrupts and spoils the exercises and enjoyments of it, so far as it takes place. Every one's observation and experience will bear an incontestable testimony to this, and shows that true friendship is found nowhere but among the meek and humble. Now, Christians, by virtue of their love and union to Christ, and the friendship with him which has been described, are become humble, meek, and lowly, so are in a peculiar manner formed for true and sweet friendship with each other — a friendship which far surpasses that of any other creatures in the universe. Their native state and circumstances, sinful, lost enemies to God and the Savior, infinitely miserable, guilty, odious, and ill deserving, lay a foundation for self-abasement and humility, when truly discerned and understood, which cannot take place to the same degree in any other circumstances. And their absolute and exceeding dependence on Christ and his rich, sovereign grace, for righteousness and strength, and every good thing, serves to set them low, and abase them forever in their own eyes. And the wonderful, amazing humility of Christ their beloved friend, which he exercised in his astonishing stoop and low abasement for their sakes, by which he in

a sense became the least in the kingdom of God, strikes their minds with a peculiar energy, and conspires, with the above-mentioned circumstances, to humble them and lay them very low. The friends of Christ are, therefore, in this sense little ones — little in their own sight, and in true humility: they have taken Christ's yoke upon them, and have learnt of him, who is, above all others, meek and lowly of heart; and as they have, under the teachings of Christ, a clear and affecting view of their own character as sinners, in all its meanness, contemptibleness, and odious deformity, which they cannot have of others, their fellow-Christians, they naturally have a much meaner thought of themselves than of others. Therefore, in the exercise of this true friendship, they are not disposed to exalt themselves, and be jealous of their own honor and prerogatives, and be displeased because others do not love, esteem, respect, and honor them so much as they desire, and they think they ought to do. No, but directly the reverse of this; they are ready to think others, their Christian friends, have too high an esteem of them, and a love and friendship for them of which they are altogether unworthy. Thus Christians are always disposed to abase and humble themselves, and, in the exercise of this love and friendship, are preferring others, and setting them above themselves; and thus they are "kindly affectioned one to another" in the strongest and sweetest friendship, "with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another." Nothing is done through strife or vainglory, but, in lowliness of mind, each esteems others better than themselves; and, as the chosen, holy, beloved friends of Christ, they have "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another," even as Christ has loved and forgiven them. As by pride and a haughty spirit cometh contention, so the meekness and humility of mind which is essential to every true lover of Christ prepares true Christians for a sweet, holy, and intimate friendship one with another, which no other persons are capable of, and in which there is a truly noble enjoyment and pleasure, which the world can neither give nor take away, and which cannot be told to him who has never tasted it.

Moreover, the uprightness and faithfulness of which every one is possessed who is a friend to Christ, and which is peculiar to them, adds a great degree of excellence and happiness to Christian friendship, which can be enjoyed in no other union and connection. Sincerity, truth, and faithfulness come into the very essence of true friendship; and the more there is of these, the more safe and happy are persons in their friendship. When it may be said of any — what is said of the wicked in

general, even all that are not friends to Christ — "that there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue," they are not capable of true friendship, whatever may pass between them that may be called by that name. They may have a sort of love and union to one another, on some occasions and in certain cases, as a company of pirates or banditti may have a sort of union and friendship, grounded wholly upon self-love and interest. But this is a very low, mean thing at best; it cannot give the enjoyments of true friendship; and, such as it is, there can be no dependence upon it that it will continue. It being built on no stable principle, it shifts and changes, flourishes or dies, according to external changes, and the shifting of humors, interests, and circumstances. They may be great friends one day, and the next be at swords' points, hating and opposing each other more than any body else; improving all their former intimacy, and the confidence they had put in each other, as an advantage put into their hands of betraying and injuring one another to the utmost of their power. There are so many instances of this every where among mankind, that every observing person must have abundant evidence of the justice of this remark.

The true friends and disciples of Christ are of a different character; they are sincere, upright, true, and faithful. Therefore, they are commonly characterized by this in Scripture, — the upright, the just, the faithful, — by which they are distinguished from all others. They are of a sincere, upright, and faithful spirit, which is peculiar to them. This, therefore, prepares them for a union and friendship with each other which can be found nowhere else. They may open their hearts and divulge their secrets to each other without danger of being betrayed, and trust and rely on one another with a great degree of confidence and safety; and there is a proper foundation for a lasting and growing friendship, whatever changes there may be in external circumstances. Thus they have the character of Solomon's true friend, who "loveth at all times." They love without dissimulation. In obeying the truth, through the Spirit, their souls are purified unto unfeigned love of the brethren, and they love one another with a pure heart, fervently. He who is possessed of Christian sincerity, integrity, and faithfulness has a pleasing idea, of which they who are not of this character have no true conception; and his heart is united to, and delights in, those who appear to be of this character, with a peculiar love and affection; and the love of such to each other is not built on any worldly circumstances and connections, or self-interest. It is a more noble, exalted, sincere

affection, and is built on more steady, lasting principles, of which the poor, if they are the disciples of Christ, are as much the objects as the rich, and it goes forth as freely and strongly to those who are overlooked and despised by the men of the world as to the great and honorable. How much has such a friendship the advantage of all others! and how greatly happy must such friends be in each other! Every thing that is called love and friendship in this world is not worthy the name, when compared with this.

And the friends of Christ, who are most acquainted with each other, do naturally enter more and more into a near, intimate, and tender friendship. As their acquaintance increases, the higher does their love arise; and their mutual kindness and acts of love and helpfulness to another, and constant, earnest prayers for each other, tend to keep up and increase their friendship, and render it more and more perfect, sweet, delightful, and profitable.

Thus, by virtue and in consequence of Christians' union to Christ and friendship with him, a peculiar, dear love and friendship takes place between them, which is the most sincere, exalted, noble, and ravishingly sweet exercise and enjoyment that can take place among creatures. Their souls are united and knit together with the bands of the most pure, strong, and lasting friendship, as the soul of Jonathan was to David, when he loved him as his own soul; and as the love and friendship between them was, so is that between the friends of Christ — even wonderful, passing the love of women. It is unspeakably more pure, strong, fervent, sweet, noble, steady, and durable than any affection and friendship which takes place between the sexes, or any persons whatsoever, which is founded only in instinct or the principles of nature.

This love and friendship is indeed very imperfect in this state, through the great imperfection and deficiency of their love to Christ and their holiness, and by reason of that ignorance of each other, which takes place in a great degree, which prevents their certainly knowing who are true friends to Christ, and who are not, and having a full and adequate idea of what is truly excellent in them, and their having so much about them which is contrary to true friendship, as is all their remaining corruption and sinfulness of heart; and this friendship is also imperfect in this state, and often, if not always, is the occasion of some uneasiness and pain, in the midst of all the sweets of it, by reason of external circumstances. They are often banished from each others' presence, and obliged to live at a distance, by which their acquaintance and intercourse is in a great measure interrupted. But if this is not the case,

and they have much opportunity to be together and have friendly intercourse, they are liable to misunderstand each other, and are often unable to communicate the sentiments and friendly exercises of their souls to their friends so clearly as would be necessary in order fully to gratify their love and friendship. And, besides, Christian friends in this state are liable to, and are actually the subjects of, many calamities and distresses of body and mind. Now, the more love and benevolence we have for our friends, the higher sympathy shall we have with them under their troubles, and their burdens and calamities will necessarily become ours in some measure; so that the higher degree of love and friendship we have for them, the more shall we suffer with them when they are in trouble. And though there is a pleasure even in this pain, yet, according to the supposition, pain there is, and necessarily will be, in such a situation.

This view of the matter shows us that perfect love and friendship does not take place in this state, nor can it exist to the best advantage, unless in a state of perfection.

However, even in this state of weakness and imperfection, where there is so much remaining darkness and sin in the best Christian, and there are so many disadvantages to friendship, true Christian friendship is the most sweet, refined, noble enjoyment that can be had in this life. It surpasses all other friendships in this respect, more than the brightness of the meridian sun exceeds the shining of the meanest glowworm. They are by far the happiest persons on earth who, being friends to Jesus Christ, are, by virtue of this, formed for true love and friendship to each other, and are brought into a union and oneness of heart and affection, by which they delight in, embrace, and enjoy each other in the arms of the most pure and ardent love. A society of such friends and lovers is the most blessed society on earth, whatever their worldly circumstances are. All earthly good, all the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world are not to be compared with this; yea, they are utterly to be despised and contemned in comparison with this. And all other unions and friendships that take place among men, which are not founded on love and friendship to Christ, are insipid, mean, and worthless, compared with this Christian friendship, which has infinitely the advantage of them so many ways. This the Christless person may disbelieve, and it may be impossible to convince him of it, as he has really no true idea of the thing. But he who has tasted the sweetness of this friendship is a witness of the refined, superlative pleasures of it, and prefers it to all other friendships, unspeakably more than he who is athirst prefers the

pure, living, crystal stream to a warm, dirty, putrid puddle. Well may the words of the royal singer be applied to this noble and happy union and friendship: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments."

There has been comparatively little of this Christian friendship, we have reason to believe, in the world hitherto; but few who have known the pleasures of this sacred union, and most of those who have felt and exercised a degree of this divine friendship, have had but a very imperfect and low degree of it; so that it has never had advantage to appear in its true beauty, and happy, glorious effects. This pure, soul-exalting, and refreshing love to Christ, and union and friendship to each other, has yet been a great stranger in this world; but the time is coming when the world shall be full of it; when all nations shall become the friends and servants of Christ, and that in the exercise of a high degree of love to him. And their love and friendship one to another will bear a proportion to this. Each one will find himself surrounded with those who give satisfying and abundant evidence of their love to Christ, and beautiful, growing conformity to him, and of their peculiar benevolence to, and delight in, all the disciples of him whom they so ardently love, and will therefore see himself loved and embraced by them with the tenderest and most pleasing affection and friendship. And how will his heart glow with ardent love to, and sweet delight in them, while he associates and converses with them with the most dear and unreserved intimacy! Yea, their hearts will burn with the fire of this sacred love and friendship, whenever they see, or even think of, one another. Then every breast shall swell with a degree of pleasure and joy which yet has been but little known; and a happiness which has yet been hardly tasted in this world shall spread itself like a mighty, pure river of delight over the face of the earth. But this friendship will not come to its full perfection and glory in this state. We cannot, therefore, have the most profitable or even a just idea of it, unless we raise our thoughts to that world and glorious kingdom into which all the friends of Christ will be shortly gathered, and united in one most amiable and happy society, in the presence of their common, most kind, excellent, and exalted Friend, in the best circumstances, and every way under the highest possible advantages to exercise and enjoy the sweetest and most perfect mutual love and friendship with Christ and one another. All that precedes this is very imperfect, and only preparatory and an

introduction to this most perfect and happy union and friendship, where the most pure and exalted love will be exercised to the highest pitch, without any restraint, and so as to give the highest possible enjoyments.

There their love to Christ will be perfect; they will be all turned into a pure and most vehement flame of love to him, and his love will be shed abroad and poured out on them, as most plentiful, refreshing floods of water upon the parched ground, which they will drink in with the highest relish, and most sacred, ravishing delight; and they will each one appear in the perfect and most amiable image of Christ, perfectly excellent, beautiful, and lovely, and full of the most sweet and lively affection to each other. The more they love Christ, and the greater assurance and sense they have of his love to them, the more love will they have to each other. They will have the greatest esteem of, and complacency in, one another. They will have as free intercourse and as great intimacy with each other as they can desire; there will be nothing to keep them at the least distance. They will be perfectly acquainted with each other, and have the most happy and easy way of communicating their thoughts, and pouring out their whole hearts and souls into each other's bosoms, and expressing their love to, and delight in, each other. If the intimacy Christian friends have with each other here is so pleasant, and it is so sweet to be beloved by them, what will it be to be embraced with such strong, constant love, and enjoy a familiarity and intimacy, in which they will mingle souls, without any reserve or restraint, and which will inconceivably exceed the greatest intimacy and most tender embraces of the dearest friends in this world! How happy must they be whose love is made perfect, and flows out to each other, without any restraint, in a most rapid torrent, and is gratified every way to the highest possible degree! And there will be nothing to cloy or abate this love; it will never fail or change, unless it be to grow more ardent and strong. The longer they live together, and the more they are acquainted with each other, the higher will their love and friendship rise, and their benevolence to each other will be pleased and gratified to the highest degree; for their friends, to whom they wish so well, are in the most happy circumstances, are as happy as they can possibly wish and desire; so that all their good will to each other will be exercised and expressed in the greatest satisfaction and joy in their happiness. And what kind offices, may we suppose, these friends will be constantly doing for each other, by which they will gratify and promote the happiness of one another!

And their acquaintance and special connections in this

world, and especially the good they have been the instruments of doing to each other here, will greatly serve to increase and sweeten their love and friendship in heaven. With what unspeakable delight will these things be remembered and recounted to each other there! With what ineffable love and gratitude will the converted and saved embrace those who have been the happy instruments of this! while they, on the other hand, shall be to such the occasion of their peculiar joy, and their crown of rejoicing forever, and be embraced by them with inexpressible tenderness, love, and delight. And O, how will they that have been most intimately acquainted here, and united in love, and have most abounded in acts of kindness and friendship to each other, and have been greatly instrumental many ways of promoting the spiritual good and salvation of each other, — how will such, however they may be parted by death for a while, meet with peculiar and unspeakable joy in that world, and love and embrace each other forever, in the arms of the most tender, sweet, exalted, growing friendship! In a word, there shall be no sinful mixtures in their love and friendship, and no defects, as there always are here, but it will be most pure and untainted. The more they love one another, not the less, but the more, will they love Jesus, their common friend; there will be no need of caution and restraint — no danger of running to excess. There will be the most perfect, refined pleasure, without the least pain, which unavoidably attends the most exalted friendship in this world. All the tears their friendship has occasioned here shall be forever wiped from their eyes. There shall be nothing but the most perfect, sweet union and harmony; nothing in the way of their expressing their love, and enjoying each other, without the least danger or fear of having it interrupted, or of their being parted from the friendly embraces of each other, to all eternity. What a world of love and friendship will this be! Though all who enter into the school of Christ have some experience of the sweets and happiness of this friendship, yet how low and childish are our thoughts and conceptions of this matter! Surely eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of any of the saints, the things which Christ has laid up for them that love him and have entered into this divine friendship with him and with each other.

A little of this friendship in this world naturally, and even necessarily, leads these Christian friends, while they feel the imperfections, impediments, and interruptions of this love and friendship here, to look forward to, and long for, that perfect state where this divine affection shall be exercised and gratified to the highest degree, and they shall eternally swim in a

boundless ocean of love. The more this friendship flourishes in their breasts now, the more weaned are they from earth and all its enjoyments, the more are their hearts fixed on heaven, and the higher and stronger are their longings for the enjoyment of the society and friendship of that world of love, and the greater is their hope and assurance of enjoying it forever.

And who can be willing to live and die a stranger to this Christian love and friendship, and so miss of that world of happiness in which it shall issue, and where it shall flourish forever? Who can be content to give up his heart to that love and those friendships only which are attended with certain disappointment, and only serve to perplex and torture the mind, and will assuredly issue in darkness, horror, and eternal hatred and discord?

Blessed, unspeakably blessed, are they in whose hearts this love and friendship is begun; who, because they love Christ, love his people also, and know that they love Christ, and have passed from death to life, because they love the brethren.

Let us then love one another, not in word, neither in tongue only, but in deed and in truth, that hereby we may know that we are of the truth, and assure our hearts before God. For this is his commandment, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.

I proceed to mention other particulars relating to Jesus Christ, considered in the character of the believer's friend, and the distinguished privileges and happiness of this friendship.

12. Jesus Christ is an unchangeably faithful and everlasting friend. Faithfulness is essential to the character of a friend; without this there can be no safety in intimacy with, and confidence in him. Through unfaithfulness and inconstancy, professed friends often betray one another; and many friendships are very short lived, and dissolve and turn into enmity and discord. But Christ is a most faithful, unchangeable friend. He never will forsake those who give themselves up to this friendship; but will do all for them, and be all to them, that they trust in him for, or can expect from him, in the character of a most able and kind friend; yea, he will always outdo all their expectations and wishes. Moreover, he will take effectual care to secure and perpetuate their love and friendship to him; so that the friendship on their parts shall never cease after it is once begun. We have great need of such a friend as this; yea, such a friend is absolutely necessary for us in this state of weakness, darkness, and sin, and where we are surrounded with innumerable, implacable enemies to Christ and to us, who are potent and subtle, and are continually doing their utmost to prevent, interrupt, and

destroy this friendship. If Christ was not security for us in this respect, — if he was not able, and had not undertaken, to prevent our falling away from this union and friendship, — alas! how soon should we break our most solemn engagements and vows, violate the most sacred obligations and ties of the dearest friendship, and turn enemies to the greatest and best of friends! There is no trust to be put in any man with respect to this. But in him there is safety; he has engaged that they who once choose him as their almighty and best friend shall persevere in their love to him. And he is faithful who has promised. With regard to this, the eternal God and Redeemer is their refuge, and underneath every saint are the everlasting arms of this almighty and most faithful Friend and Savior. This is he who was Peter's friend, and prayed that his faith and love might not fail in the sore trial and dangerous conflict he had to go through. And it was wholly owing to his care and faithfulness that Peter did not wholly fall from his friendship to Christ; but his trial and fall were the occasion of the increase of his love to his best, most faithful, and dearest friend, so that it soon rose to such an ardent flame that he was able with the greatest confidence to say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Such a friend have all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; for whom he once loves, he always loves to the end. How safe and secure, then, do they feel themselves in this love and friendship, that it shall certainly continue and flourish to eternity, who are able to say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend"!

13. Christ is a most meek, tender, compassionate, forgiving friend.

If he did not excel in these things to an infinite degree he could not be our friend. We have injured him more than any other person in the universe, and have done more to affront him, and provoke him to anger, than ever was done to any other. And even his friends have comparatively but a very small degree of love and friendship to him; it is a mere nothing, compared to what they ought to have and he is most worthy of. They are guilty of the most amazing stupidity and base ingratitude, and in many ways and respects act a most foolish, wicked, and unfriendly part towards him, by which they are violating the most sacred laws of friendship and the highest imaginable obligations. No friend but this in the universe would bear such treatment, and yet continue his love and friendship. And was he not meek, tender, compassionate, and long-suffering beyond any parallel, he would so resent such treatment and horrid abuse of him as to with-

draw his friendship, and renounce them forever. But as a tender father pitieth his children, so he pitieth his friends; he is long-suffering, abundant in goodness and tender mercy, and ready to forgive all their folly and wicked abuse of his love. He will forgive them, not seven times only, but seventy times seven; yea, without any bounds or limits. His loving kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. We have a striking instance of this in his treatment of his friends when he was on earth. They remained in a great degree ignorant and unteachable under his constant instructions. They were inattentive, stupid, perverse, and unbelieving in a manner and degree that was very criminal and provoking. Yet he bore with them, and forgave them, and continued his love and kindness to them. He continued to treat them with the greatest tenderness and love. He constantly attended to their interest, and labored for their good, and his love and gentleness made them great. In the last hours of his life, when the dreadful scene of his sufferings for his people was just before him, he, as a most tender friend, accommodated himself to their weakness: he attended to their case, their sorrow and trouble touched his heart, and he pitied them, and set himself to instruct and comfort them in the most kind and tender manner. Such an astonishingly kind, tender, and forgiving friend had they. And with transports of joy may every one of his true disciples say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

14. Christ is the most wise, kind, and able physician, to heal and cure all his friends of the disorders and diseases that attend them. Such a friend they want, and no other could answer the end of a friend to them but such a one. He finds them in a most dreadful condition, even dead in trespasses and sins. They are undone and slain, having died a most shockingly dreadful and truly accursed death. Their souls are bruised and mangled in the most horrible manner, and torn all to pieces, as it were, limb from limb. And the devil, who has had a great hand in the horrible slaughter, and has the power of death, sits brooding over and watching his prey. In this respect they may be compared to a dead corpse of one who has been most cruelly broken on the rack — every joint being dislocated, and each bone broken to pieces, and all the flesh terribly bruised and torn from the bones and sinews. In this state Christ finds them. He dispossesses the devil, and breathes into them a degree of life and healing influence. He finds them thus cast out as in the open field, and speaks the sovereign, omnipotent word, and bids them live; and that time is a time of love. The soul, in the exercise of this new

life, cleaves to Christ as its healer and husband, and becomes his in a covenant of love and friendship which never can be broken. Christ brings them into his house, and his banner over them is love. He binds up their wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and washes away their blood from them. And now do they first begin to have a degree of sensibility, and to feel their dreadful disorders, their wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores. They who are wholly dead in trespasses and sins, and under the dominion of enmity against God and the Redeemer, are, in this respect, like the dead corpse; whatever dreadful wounds and disorders are upon them, they are quite insensible of the matter. But as soon as a degree of life and restoration takes place, there is a proportionable degree of sensibility; they feel their disorders and wounds, and the need they stand in of healing, and that they want a physician infinitely distinguished from any mere creature in wisdom, power, and goodness, who has a remedy which no other has or can have. They see Christ to be such a physician. They immediately say, "There is balm in Gilead, there is a physician there, exactly suited to my case." And into his hand they commit their disordered souls, despairing of a cure, unless wrought by his most skilful, tender hand. Christ, as their most faithful and kind friend, undertakes for them. He faithfully and constantly attends to their case, searches every wound to the bottom, and applies the best remedy, and that in the wisest manner and in the best and most seasonable time; so that the cure in the end may be most complete and perfect, not leaving spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and attended with the most advantageous consequences. And he will never leave them till he has completed it. He could, indeed, cure them perfectly all at once, at a word's speaking, as he did many bodily diseases when he was on earth, and not go into such a long process and continued course of applications, under which the patient is often put to much pain, and seems to himself to grow worse rather than better, and sometimes is ready to despair of a cure, and say, "All these things are against me." But he takes the latter, and not the former method, because that, on the whole, it is far the wisest and best; the cure is much more perfect and glorious in the end, and attended with consequences unspeakably more happy for the subjects of it. How happy, then, are the friends of Christ in this respect! They are connected with, and united to, a friend who is a most skilful and kind physician, and has furnished himself with every remedy that is needed to heal and cure them, under their singular, and otherwise desperate, disorders. And he is infinitely engaged in the best manner

to effect the most complete, happy, and glorious cure, and that without money and without price. He is the Lord, that bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound. O Christian, "This is thy beloved, and this is thy friend."

15. Christ is a friend who is infinitely happy, is independent and self-sufficient, and has the highest honors in the universe put upon him.

This is an unspeakable advantage in this friendship, and renders it immensely more sweet and happy to the friends of Christ than it could otherwise be. If our friend is in a state of calamity and suffering, in any respect and degree, or is exposed to calamity and evil, it of course becomes our calamity, and we necessarily share in the evil with him, in a degree proportionable to our benevolence and friendship. This renders friendship very unhappy in many instances in this world, because the beloved person is very unhappy. For true benevolence to our friend is crossed by every degree of evil that he suffers, and desires he may have all the honor and happiness he is capable of; and, therefore, cannot be perfectly satisfied and pleased with any thing short of this. And if our friend is as much honored and as happy as we can imagine and desire, this will give us an enjoyment, and render the friendship sweet and happy, in proportion to the degree to which it rises and is exercised. For, as we necessarily share in the evil that our friend suffers, so we do in his happiness. There is, therefore, the best foundation laid for happiness in this friendship that in the nature of things can be, whereby our love and benevolence to Christ is gratified and pleased to the highest possible degree.

Christ has, indeed, been subjected to a state of calamity and suffering; he has suffered disgrace and pain to the most amazing degree, and that for his friends; but he has, on the whole, lost nothing by it. If he had, this would have been an undesirable circumstance, which could not possibly be removed, but must have been an alloy to this friendship, and a source of uneasiness to the friends of Christ forever. For it will necessarily give pain to any one who has entered into true friendship with another, to have his friend a loser in any respect, especially to have him in the least degree a loser on his account. He cannot bear to think of being an injury or disadvantage to his friend in any respect, and that, on the whole, he should be a loser by him; and it is as impossible to reconcile true love and friendship to this as to unite the opposite parts of a contradiction. But what Christ has suffered for his people is, in this respect, no disadvantage to this friend-

ship; for, as has been just now observed, he has, on the whole, lost nothing by it, but has been an infinite gainer. His humiliation and sufferings, even unto death, have been the occasion of his greater happiness and high exaltation. By this means, and in this way, he has been anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and been made to drink of the river of God's pleasures; and this has been the occasion of his being made King of Zion, and raised to the throne of the universe, invested with all power in heaven and on earth, as the sole Ruler in God's moral kingdom, and final Judge of all. Because he thus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. He is richly rewarded, more than ten thousand fold, for all he expended and suffered for the redemption of his people; and their redemption and salvation is the occasion of a high degree of happiness and honor, which he could have obtained no other way.

This does not, indeed, lessen their obligations to him for what he has done and suffered for them in the least imaginable degree, for they are every way as great as if he had been an infinite loser by the means. But this is suited to gratify and please his benevolent friends to the highest degree, and add a sweetness and joy to their friendship inexpressible. The language of their friendly, benevolent hearts is, "Let him be most blessed forever; let him be exalted in the glory of his salvation, and have all the honors of the universe given to him." And when they see him exalted, honored, and blessed, as heir of the whole universe, and independent Lord and Possessor of all things, and that this is the consequence and reward of what he has done for the redemption of sinners, with what unbounded joy must their hearts expand, while, with the most sweet, ineffable delight, they join their hearty amen, and say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, was dead and is alive, and liveth forevermore, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. To him be glory and dominion, forever and ever, Amen"! This circumstance greatly adds to the happiness of this friendship, and spreads ineffable sweetness through the soul of the true Christian, when he is able to say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

16. All that Christ requires of his friends is, to act the part of friends to him, and to maintain, cultivate, and improve this friendship between him and them.

This greatly recommends him as a friend, and is a happy circumstance of this friendship between him and his people.

His condescension, love, and goodness to his friends, and the intimacy and unreserved familiarity to which he admits them, have been already particularly considered. He does not take state on himself so as in any degree to keep them at a distance, nor does he impose heavy burdens on them, and subject them to hard, slavish service, as the master does his servants, in order to their enjoying his favor and friendship. No; he does not call them servants, nor in any respect treat them as such; but he calls them *friends*, and treats them according to this most dear, soft, and tender name. And all he expects and requires of them is, that they cleave to him as their friend, and as becomes his true friends, and in all respects act up to this most endeared and exalted character. In this regard the law of Christ is nothing but a law of love and friendship, as nothing else is required; it is, therefore, called the perfect law of liberty. All that Christ requires of his friends is, that they return love for love; that they receive and cleave to him in all proper ways, as their almighty, infinitely excellent, kind, bountiful, and benevolent friend; that they constantly look to him, and trust in him, as such, for all they want, relying wholly on his friendship and goodness, and being heartily willing, with all thankfulness, delight, and joy, to be wholly and infinitely indebted to him for all things, as being in themselves nothing but emptiness, insufficiency, wretchedness, guilt, and deformity, heartily acquiescing in it that he should do the office of such a friend to them; that they heartily love, esteem, honor, and rejoice in him, in this character, live a life of nearness and intimacy with him, and follow him wheresoever he goes, and do all those acts of love and kindness to him that become his friends, and by which they may properly express and discover their true and superlative love and friendship to him. Thus he tells his disciples that he required nothing of them but that in which they might express and evidence their friendship to him. "Ye are my friends," says he, "if ye do whatsoever I command you."

What a sweet and delightful work, then, are all the friends of Christ called to! viz., to love the most excellent, worthy, dear, and kind friend, and cultivate the greatest intimacy and most sweet friendship with him. In one word, he only requires them to be happy in him, in the nearest and highest enjoyment of him as their friend, in the exercise and gratification of an inclination and affection, which gives the most ravishingly sweet and delightful enjoyment that in nature can be. Surely all the friends of Christ may say, from their own experience, "His yoke is easy, and his burden light. His commandments are not grievous, but perfectly delightful; and

in keeping them there is a great reward. The ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. We have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches." And now, O Christian, what does the Lord, thy all-sufficient Friend and Redeemer, require of thee but to say, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend," and live answerable to such a high profession and character?

17. Another advantage and peculiar happiness of this friendship is, that the friends of Christ have just as much evidence that he is their friend as they have that they are friends to him; and this evidence rises, and is clear, in proportion to the degree of exercise of love and friendship to him.

It has been observed, that it is essential to true love and friendship for any one to desire to be the object of his love, and to have him his friend on whom he has set his affections. And the more sincere and strong our friendly affection and love to another is, the more do we desire to be the objects of his love and friendship, and the greater uneasiness and pain will attend suspicions of his love to us. As it is the sweetest, happiest thing in the world, even the highest enjoyment we can imagine, to be beloved, especially by those for whom we have a high esteem and a strong and most friendly affection, so, perhaps, nothing is more disagreeable, or will give a more sensible, cutting pain, than to find ourselves neglected and quite cast off by such. And this is eminently true in the case before us. True friendship to Christ does render it above all things desirable, to him that exercises it, to be the object of Christ's love and favor. And to be cast off by him, and be the object of his displeasure and wrath, is to such a one, above any thing else, undesirable and dreadful. In this case, above any other, "love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, even a most vehement flame."

This has often proved a great unhappiness in human love and friendship, especially that which takes place between the sexes. Many a one has been most cruelly tortured and undone by this. They have had a vehement affection and love for another, while they have found themselves not beloved, but slighted and despised: this has proved to them an insupportable burden, spread darkness over all things under the sun, rendered them incapable of enjoying any thing, and made them weary of their own life, and has often put an end to it by a lingering, cruel death.

But the friends of Christ are, in this respect, most happy. They can no further doubt of his love to them than they

question their own love and friendship to him. If they love him, and are his true friends, he is certainly their friend. Yea, if they love him in sincerity, though in never so imperfect and low a degree, they are the objects of his love, and a friendship is begun between Christ and them which will continue forever. For this Christ has given his word to all his friends. He has said, "I love them that love me; and he that loveth me, I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

We want nothing, then, in order to be assured that Christ loves us with a strong and everlasting love, and is our unchangeable friend, but to know that we love him; or, in other words, we may be certain that Christ loves us, so far as we have good evidence that we sincerely desire and prize his love and friendship; and our evidence of this will be in proportion to the degree of our love to him, or the strength and constancy of our affection and friendship. This is true in all instances of love and affection to any friend; the evidence that we do love them, and are their friends, will be in proportion to the degree and constancy of the exercise of our love and friendship to them, and the expression of it in all proper ways. This love always evidences itself, and is attended with a consciousness that it does exist in our hearts, in proportion to the strength and constancy of its exercise; and we may love a friend to such a degree as to remove all doubt, yea, render us absolutely assured that we do love him.

So it is in this case; if we doubt whether we are true friends of Jesus Christ, it must be because we are not so, or are so in a very weak and low degree, and with great inconstancy, and there is much in our hearts and actions directly contrary to love and friendship; and as this love rises, and becomes more and more a constant, vigorous exercise and flame in the heart, the Christian will have higher evidence and greater confidence that he is a friend to Christ, and, consequently, that Christ is his friend; and nothing is wanting but a constant, vigorous exercise of this love, in order to a constant consciousness and prevailing assurance that this glorious Person is our beloved, and, consequently, that he loves us, and is our friend.

Thus we see how happy this friendship is in this respect, by which it is distinguished from all other friendships whatsoever. Full provision is made for the gratification of love to Christ in all respects. In proportion as the Christian loves Christ, he enjoys him, and his love and friendship is gratified and pleased in a sense and evidence of Christ's love to him. So far as he prizes Christ's love, and really desires to have him his friend, from true love to him, and has a sense and evidence that he

does love him, just so far he has a sense and evidence that Christ actually is his friend and does love him; so that this desire is gratified and answered, and turned into a degree of sweet enjoyment, in proportion to the strength and constancy of it. When the Christian, therefore, can with confidence say, "This is my beloved," he may with equal assurance add, "This is my friend." For these God has joined together; and nothing, neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be ever able to separate them.

18. This friendship between Christ and the believer will reconcile men to death, and support and comfort them under the death of others, their Christian friends.

It tends to make death desirable and sweet. Friends have been so united in this world, and had such a love for each other, that if one must die, the other would choose to die with him; and so the death of one has made death desirable to the other. But the friendship of which I am speaking has a much more powerful influence this way, in many respects. When a friend to Christ, with his heart full of love to him, looks into the grave, and considers that there his dearest Lord and Friend once lay, this will sweeten the grave to him, and make the thought of laying his head in the dust pleasant, and he will be ready to say with one of his friends of old, "Let me die with him." Besides, friendship to Christ reconciles to death, and renders it desirable, and the thought of it sweet, as it is the only way to the full enjoyment of Christ, and a dwelling with him in his holy and glorious kingdom. The friend of Christ longs to be delivered from all contrariety to him, as what is most odious, and the greatest burden, and to get rid of all ignorance, and coldness, and indifference towards him, and be turned into a perfect, pure flame of love to him; to dwell in his presence, and honor, praise, and serve him day and night; and when he sees death to be the only way to this, he is not only reconciled to it, but is ready to long for it; and when he sees that his almighty Friend has conquered death, and taken away the sting of it, with what courage and joy can he look it in the face! while with him who was one of Christ's great friends on earth seventeen hundred years ago, and is now with him in heaven, he desires to depart and be with Christ, which to him is far the best of any thing he can conceive of or wish for.

Again: this friendship with Christ gives the best support under the death of dear Christian friends, and lays a foundation even for comfort in it. Herein it has the advantage of all other friendships. The more strongly they take place, the

more is death dreaded; because this puts an utter end to the friendship, and cuts off all hopes of ever seeing and enjoying one another again. It is in this view that St. Paul speaks of the sorrow and mourning of those that were no Christians, on the death of their dear friends, as those who have no hope. They are left quite disconsolate on the death of their friends, because they have no hope of ever seeing and enjoying them again. But Christians have no reason to mourn so. They may part with each other here with high hopes and full assurance of meeting again in a short time, and enjoying each other, to a much higher degree and in a better manner, than ever they did before, in the presence of Christ, in his glorious kingdom.

When our dear Christian friends are torn from our fond embraces, and we are deprived of their sweet company, and know we shall see them no more on earth, the more we love Christ, and the greater is our benevolence to them, the more comfort and joy shall we have in the thought that they have ceased from sin, yea, from all their labors and troubles, and are gone to be with Christ, our great and common Friend, and enjoy the benefits of this friendship to an immensely higher degree than we can here; that they will soon be restored to us, with great advantage, and we shall see them in Christ's kingdom, unspeakably more loving and lovely than they were here; and, in a much more noble and perfect friendship, shall reap the happy consequence, and all the advantages of our acquaintance and friendship here, and be forever with the Lord, our glorious Friend and Redeemer. Surely Christians may well, under the loss of their dearest friends, comfort one another with these words.

19. Christ will bring his friends to the nearest enjoyment of himself, and communion with him, where they shall taste the growing sweets of his love and friendship forever.

This is one peculiar excellency and privilege of this friendship, and, what crowns all, that, with all its superior excellence and sweetness, and with every other advantage and desirable circumstance, it will never come to an end, but will continue, flourish, and increase forever. The many and great disadvantages and imperfections that attend it in this state shall soon wholly cease, and every thing desirable, and that can possibly advance it in any respect and degree, shall take place, and that unspeakably beyond the highest flights of the warmest and brightest imagination. This has been repeatedly brought into view, and in several particulars that have been mentioned; but it is so important an article of this friendship, that it seems to deserve our more particular attention.

This friendship is, in this world, very sweet, and exceeds all

others, both in its excellency and in the enjoyment it gives. But this is but a low beginning of something immensely more exalted and happy; and it is only preparatory to that which shall be most perfect and everlasting. This friendship is exceeding imperfect in this state, has many interruptions and hinderances, and is attended with numerous inconveniences, which often occasion great pain and distress, which is peculiar to the friends of Christ, and is many times very keen, and even overwhelming. Their remaining degrees of unfriendliness and opposition of heart to Christ, their blindness, stupidity, ingratitude, their great degree of alienation from Christ, their unfruitfulness, and the ill returns they make to him, and their want of a sense of his love and favor, are a most heavy burden to them, under which they often go mourning all the day long. For these things their souls are bowed down and greatly disquieted within them. And their love to Christ, and concern for his interest in the world, is often the occasion of great concern and trouble, while they live in such a wicked world as this, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, where there are so many enemies to Christ, and his cause is in so many ways opposed and run down. These things often cause them to hang their harps on the willows in this strange land, and to sit down and weep when they remember Zion and the interest of their Friend and Redeemer; and rivers of water run down their eyes, because men keep not his law, but dishonor him. And the higher their love and friendship to Christ rises, the more affecting and painful will these things be to them — like the dear friends of Christ, the holy women who followed him weeping when he went to the cross, surrounded by an insulting crowd of cruel enemies. Their love to Christ, their dearest friend, filled their hearts with the keenest twinges of the most cutting pain, which, as a dreadful sword, pierced their souls through and through.

But it is wisely and kindly ordered that this friendship should begin in such a state as this, and in these circumstances; and this will all turn to its great advantage in the issue, and prepare the way for a higher enjoyment than if they had never taken place. Christ, their great friend and patron, superintends, and is in this way disciplining them, and in the best manner training them up for the near enjoyment of him in the most perfect state of friendship and happiness. They are espoused to him, though they are in an enemy's country; and he is preparing them for the happy nuptials, when they shall be brought into his presence and kind embraces, never to part again. And all their pain and sorrow in this world which they have suffered on his account, and all they

have done and suffered for him, shall, in the end, serve to increase their enjoyment and happiness, and be richly rewarded by him.

He has desired and prayed that they all may be where he is, that they may behold his glory, and enjoy him to the best advantage and in the highest degree; and he will never rest till he has brought them to this. He will bring them to share in his own honors and happiness as fully as their enlarged capacities will admit. He will seat them at his own right hand; yea, they shall sit down with him on his throne, and reign jointly with him, as the queen shares in the dignity and honors of the prince her husband. They shall drink with him of the river of his pleasures, and enjoy all that he has, even the whole of his boundless riches and most extensive kingdom. He will bring forth all his hidden treasures for them, and open his heart to them in the fullest manner and without any reserve. He will make them perfectly like himself, and put his own beauty and glory upon them, and bring them to a high and perfect relish for his beauty, and put them in all respects, and every way, under the best advantage to love and enjoy him forever. This shall perfect this friendship, which will be increasing in unknown, inconceivable heights forever and ever.

Thus they shall be satisfied, perfectly satisfied, and inconceivably happy, when they shall awake in his likeness, and stand complete before him, the beloved of their souls, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore. Then it will be said concerning every one of the true friends of Christ, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Then shall Christ appear, in all his fulness and glory, as the head of his church, and, in the highest and most emphatical sense, say, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly." Then the angels will tune their notes higher than ever, and say, with a voice like the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunderings, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, the glorious Friend and Bridegroom of the redeemed; for the mar-

riage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

The friends of Christ now little think what they are coming to, and what will be the issue of these exercises they now have. They have already seen and enjoyed what others never have, for Christ, in his superlative glory and excellence, has been manifested unto them; but they shall see greater things than these. And the words which Christ spoke to one of his disciples when he was on earth are applicable to all of them: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, the friends of Christ, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

APPLICATION.

I. This subject, as it has been considered, affords great evidence of the truth and divinity of Christianity, and of all the great and leading doctrines, and at the same time shows how the Christian, though not learned, or of great natural capacity, is assured that it is a revelation from the only true God, and will give eternal life and happiness to all who cordially embrace it.

If the gospel is formed and suited to give those who embrace it the highest and most refined and noble enjoyment, which is the beginning of most complete and endless happiness, — if, so far as it has its proper and genuine influence on the hearts and lives of men, it spreads happiness through society, and forms all to a happy union, by which they promote, enjoy, and rejoice in the welfare of each other, and brings them into a friendship, which is in the nature of it perfect, having nothing undesirable, and nothing wanting to render it the most excellent, noble, and durable love and friendship that can be imagined, — then it must be divine, a revelation from Heaven, the production of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. But that all this is true, has been made abundantly evident, by the very imperfect representation in the preceding discourses. And it is sufficiently supported by the Scripture itself, by impartial reason, and by abundant experience.

This scheme of friendship and happiness for man never would have been thought of by any one of the human race, had it not been revealed from Heaven. Hence it is made certain that no other scheme of religion but that revealed in the Bible is true, or can make men happy by embracing it;

and that all other methods to obtain happiness, of which there are many devised by the wit and learning of the most sagacious among men, are mere delusions, and never will or can obtain it. For when the world by their wisdom knew not God, or the way to true happiness, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save and make completely and eternally happy all them who believe.

But the unbeliever will say, "I do not pretend to understand the Scriptures; but I am certain that my reason and experience dictate that there is no happiness in attending to the Bible, but very much the contrary. And the spread of Christianity in the world has been far from making mankind more happy than they were without it. It has been the occasion of unspeakable calamity. And even professing Christians, instead of being united by it in love and friendship, have been the greatest enemies to each other, and destroyed one another in the most cruel manner."

Answer. That such have received no happiness by the attention they have paid to the Bible is not an argument of the least weight that it is not to be found there. Men may come to the Bible with a strong and prevailing disposition and taste of mind or heart which does not relish that in which true happiness consists, but is highly disgusted and displeased with it. With this vitiated taste, they relish and seek after happiness where it cannot be found, being wholly blind to these spiritual, noble objects and truths, in the knowledge and enjoyment of which there is the highest happiness. And such a wrong taste and disposition tends to bias their understanding and reason, so as to render it partial, and incline to speculative error. It is, therefore, to *impartial* reason that we appeal.

This blindness, which consists in a wrong taste and disposition of mind, the Scripture speaks of as common to all men in their natural state; and when it so commonly takes place, it is a confirmation of the truth of the Scripture. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

As to the effect which Christianity has had in the world, it is acknowledged that, where it has been perverted and abused, it has been the occasion of much evil. The best things are capable of abuse, and of being made the occasion of great misery. But this is no argument against their excellency, and tendency to the greatest good, when improved according to their nature. In order to be under advantages to determine this question we must study the Bible, and learn what are the doctrines and precepts contained in it. Every one who, with

impartiality and a right or good taste, does this, sees what Christianity is, and knows that, in conformity to it, the greatest peace, love, and friendship, and the most pure and noble happiness, is to be enjoyed; though an abuse of it may be attended with the worst consequences.

This brings into view the other part of the inference we are considering, viz., that the true Christian has a constant evidence in his own mind that Christianity is from Heaven, and will give complete and eternal life and happiness to all who embrace it. They have found and tasted this happiness, consisting in Christian friendship to Christ and to all who appear to bear his image, and know that nothing is wanting in order to their complete felicity forever but to have this friendship perfected, and attended with every circumstance favorable to it. They are sure this scheme is from Heaven, and has a divine stamp upon it, as it is as much beyond man to form it as to create the world. They may not be able to produce all which is called the *external evidence* of the truth of Christianity, or to answer all the subtle cavils, and objections, and witty scoffs of infidels, but are able to say, with the primitive Christians, "We know that the Son of God has come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true. This is the true God, and eternal life." And they are witnesses to the truth declared by their beloved Lord and Savior. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." They have found the treasure hid in a field, the pearl of great price. They have found all they want to make them eternally happy; and cheerfully forsake and give up every thing else, and renounce all hopes or desires of any other happiness, for the sake of these.

II. How happy are the true friends of Christ! They have a degree of sweet enjoyment and happiness now, which strangers intermeddle not with, in love and union of heart to Christ and their fellow-saints. They taste the sweets of Christian friendship, in comparison with which all other enjoyments are low, insipid, and worthless. They see such superlative, ravishing beauty and excellence in their most beloved friend, that they are become insensible and dead to all those objects which glitter in the eyes of the world and charm their hearts, by which they are hurried on in the pursuit of them with the greatest eagerness. They have a friend of such excellence and worth, that it will take an eternity to tell what he is and make a full display of his sufficiency and perfection. What though their portion in this world is mean, and their lot hard; it is ordered by their kind, wise friend for their best good.

What though they may be overlooked, yea, despised, by men, and are counted the offscouring of all things; their names are enrolled in the most honorable place in heaven; they are engraven on the breast of Him who is at the head of the universe, who is their almighty and everlasting Friend, and will confess their names before the congregated universe. Their life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, their friend, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory. Though they are inconceivably unworthy, guilty, despicable, and ill deserving in themselves, yet their friend, to whom they are united, has dignity and worthiness enough to recommend to the highest honors and happiness. Because they love him, and have united themselves to him, as their friend and patron, the great Father of the universe loves them, and is disposed to bestow on them all imaginable favors and honors; and all the angels delight in them, and join to serve and honor them. By virtue of their union to, and interest in, this friend and patron, they are counted worthy of immensely higher honors and happiness than their most perfect and longest-continued holiness could have entitled them to. The low, guilty, and wretched state into which they are fallen by sin shall, on the whole, be no disadvantage to them, but infinitely to the contrary. All this evil shall be turned into the greatest good to them. From this infinite depth of guilt and woe, in which they are sunk infinitely below the reach of any finite arm, they shall be raised to the top of the creation, and be made the highest and happiest of all, next to the most blessed and glorious personage to whom they are united and bear the most near and honorable relation. With him they shall dwell forever, and be admitted to as great intimacy and familiarity as if he was their equal, and immensely more, even as great as they can possibly desire — shall constantly have all the tokens and expressions of his love they can wish for, and enjoy a dear and sweet friendship with him, without interruption, which shall exceed every thing of the kind beyond conception, and will grow more and more sweet and transporting through boundless duration, eternal ages. In that world of love, where all shall swim in this river, this boundless ocean of sacred pleasure and delight, they shall have the sweetest, the cream of all; as the first born, they shall inherit a double portion forever. But I must stop; the theme is boundless.

Am I speaking to any of the friends of Jesus Christ, who love him in sincerity, and, as chaste virgins, are espoused to him? Hail, ye blessed of the Lord! Ye are greatly beloved by him, and nothing shall be able to separate you from his love. All

things are working together for your good. Jesus, the beloved of your souls, is at the head of the universe, and is the appointed Judge of all. Lift up your heads, and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh. You shall soon see him at the head of his most glorious kingdom, with all his enemies under his feet. He will completely fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness towards you. All things are for your sakes, that his abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. Be entreated, then, not to faint, but lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. Let us not cease to pray for one another, and for all the saints, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us more of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance, which he has provided for all the saints.

III. But who are these most happy persons, the true friends of Jesus Christ? Many are doubtless deceiving themselves in this important point. They are professing great love to Jesus Christ, and are confident that he is their friend, while indeed they know him not, and are real enemies to his true character, and will be found at last the workers of iniquity, of whom he will be ashamed, and reject them as those whom he never knew. There may be others who, though they are his real friends, are often calling their love and friendship to Christ in question, and ready sometimes even to conclude against themselves. It may, therefore, be worth while to attend to this question a little, to which the subject we are upon naturally leads us.

Doubtless many readers have had this serious and important question in view through the whole of the preceding discourses; and while we have attended to the nature, peculiar circumstances, and exercises of this friendship, much has been said to give light in this matter, and assist persons in determining whether they are in any degree acquainted with this divine friendship or not. But, for the further assistance of those who are seriously inquiring whether they are true friends to Christ or not, — that the truly sincere may be encouraged and comforted, and the presumptuous self-deceiver may be detected and convinced, — it may be worth while to attend to the following particulars, which this subject naturally brings into view: —

1. True friendship to Jesus Christ is not grounded on, and does not originate from, a conviction and belief that he loves them and is their friend.

This has been apparent in the whole description that has

been given of this love and friendship, and is most evident from the reason and nature of things. Where one loves, and is a friend to another only because he is persuaded that the other loves him, there is no real benevolence, esteem, complacency, or true friendship in the case. It is nothing but self-love, called out to exercise in this particular way, in which there is not a spark of true friendship, but is a principle most directly opposite to it of any in nature. The man is a friend to himself, he is wholly bound up in his own private interest, and values and seeks nothing else, and takes no complacency and delight in any thing else, in no person or thing, any further than in his view it is friendly to him, or tends some way to promote his interest, or that which he looks upon so. Such a one continuing so is not capable of true friendship, to which disinterested benevolence is essential. This is so plain a dictate of the common sense and feeling of mankind, that it cannot be disputed. If the affection and friendship of any one to us is evidently wholly grounded in the kindness he has received from us and our friendship towards him, and all his affection and regard is excited and kept up by this consideration only, — so that if we should leave off to show kindness to him, or he should suppose that we were not his friends, all his affection and friendship would immediately cease, — if this was evidently all the friendship he has for us, we cannot help looking on such a one not to be our true friend. Such sort of friendship as this may take place between persons who have not the least degree of true benevolence, and who are real enemies to each other's true character; and all mankind have joined to pronounce it a worthless thing, and not worthy the name of true friendship; and it is as distant from true friendship, and as worthless, when exercised towards Jesus Christ, as if it was exercised towards us. Yet many are here deceiving themselves, and offering that to Christ for his acceptance which, if we should offer to any of our fellow-men, they would despise and abhor.

But the true friends of Christ have had their affection and love to him excited, and they have commenced his true friends, from a view of his true character exhibited in divine revelation, entirely independent of the consideration of his loving and being a friend to them. When his character was once opened to their view, and they saw what manner of person he was, they were pleased and charmed with him, and their hearts became friendly to him in a moment. They did not, neither could they, stay till they knew he was their friend and loved them before they commenced his friends and gave their hearts to him. No; they could not but love him, whether he loved

them or no. That this is always true of the real friends of Christ is evident to a demonstration, not only from what has been just now observed of the nature of true friendship, there being no other such, but that which is founded in a disinterested love and affection, but from this plain and infallible truth, viz., that we can have no evidence that Christ is our friend and loves us until it is evident that we are his friends. There is no other possible way for any person to know, or have the least ground to think, that Christ is his friend, but by first becoming a friend to him. If, therefore, he waits, and neglects to become friendly to Christ, till he has some evidence that Christ is more a friend to him than to every other person, he never will be a friend to him. We are, therefore, certain, that if there are any friends to Christ in this world, they became so antecedent to any evidence which they had that Christ was their friend and loved them; for it is impossible they should have any such evidence antecedent to their love to him, and as the ground and spring of it; this evidence being always consequent on our love to Christ, and never before it. Christ says, "He that loveth me, I will love him; or, I will love them that love me." Here we see Christ's love and friendship is grounded on a person's love to him, and is the consequence of it; therefore, the latter cannot be the consequence of the former, and grounded on that; and here Christ promises his love and friendship to them who love him; therefore, according to this promise, our love to him is the only evidence that he is our friend; and there is not one promise in the Bible of Christ's special love and friendship to any one, unless he has that character which implies true love to Christ; or, they who are not the true friends to Christ have no promise made to them of Christ's special love and favor; therefore, can have no degree of evidence of it while they continue such. They, therefore, who think they have had any token or evidence of Christ's special love to them antecedent to their loving him, or before they become his friends, are most certainly deluded; and they whose friendship to Christ is built on such a supposition, and has originated wholly from the belief that he was their special friend, are founding all their friendship on a gross delusion, and are indeed no true friends to Christ, and need nothing but to see the truth, in order to know they are not; and they who will not love Christ, and become friends to him, till they first know, or believe on good evidence, that he is their special friend, will never be his friends in this world; therefore, will certainly remain his enemies to all eternity.

The true friends of Christ love him for what he is in himself, and all their friendship to him consists originally and funda-

mentally in this. He has worthiness and excellency, beauty and charms enough in his person and character to win the heart of any one who has the least degree of true discerning and right taste and disposition. If persons have no degree of such taste and discerning, all the possible manifestations and testimonies of Christ's special love to them would not beget the least spark of such a disposition, so would not produce the least degree of true friendship; therefore, would do no manner of good to such a one, but hurt, as it would be the occasion of the exercise of the wickedness and lusts of his heart, and leave him really a more confirmed enemy to Christ than he was before. But if persons have any degree of right taste and discerning implanted in their hearts, — which is always done in regeneration, — they will love and be charmed with the beauty and excellence of Christ's character, and commence his true friends immediately, before they know or have the least evidence that he is their friend or has any special love to them. And it is in consequence of their thus loving and cleaving to him that he manifests himself to them as their special Friend and Redeemer. And this manifestation is made by the medium of their love to him, which, as has been before observed, is in all cases the only evidence that any person can have that Christ is indeed his friend. Christ himself has, on design, stated this matter as plain as words can make it. He says, "He that loveth me, I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

It is granted that the manifestation and evidence of Christ's special love to his true friends will greatly increase their love to him; and, therefore, in a sense and degree, they love him because he first loved them; or, his love to them, manifested in the way just mentioned, does render him more dear to them, and greatly increase and sweeten their love and friendship for him. But if they had no antecedent love to him, grounded upon what he is in himself, such manifestation would not be the occasion of any true love, as has been observed. When, therefore, a sense and manifestation of Christ's love to them is said to be the occasion of their love to him, it is supposed that they were already, and antecedent to this, his true friends. The more true love and friendship we have for any one, grounded on the true worth and excellence of his character, the more pleasing will it be to us to be beloved by him, and the more will it increase our love and friendship.

The view of this matter which we have now had is sufficient to demonstrate to every considerate, unprejudiced person that those remarkable words of the apostle John, "We love him because he first loved us," cannot mean that our

love to Christ originates from a belief and sense of his love to us, as the proper cause and reason of it, so that men never love him in any other view, or on any other account, and our love to him is in proportion to the evidence and manifestation of his love to us; so that when this evidence ceases, and we call in question his love to us, our love to him ceases, and again rises in proportion to our belief and assurance that he is our friend. This is the meaning that many have put on them and earnestly contended for. But what has been said is sufficient to show that they herein contend for a love and friendship to Christ which is not true friendship, but is perfectly selfish and mercenary, so cannot be that in which true Christianity consists. The worst of men will love those that love them, without any alteration in their moral character at all. Such a love is no virtue, but rather a vice, as it is only the exercise of their lusts. And these same men will love Christ if they can be persuaded to believe that Christ loves them, and yet be as destitute of true religion, and as vicious, as ever. And whoever is a friend to Christ only in this view, and on this account, has no true religion, and is, at bottom, a real enemy to Christ. The meaning of these words, then, "We love him because he first loved us," must be, that God's love and benevolence to us is the ground and reason of our ever being brought to love him, as we never should have been brought to such a temper and disposition, but have continued his enemies, had he not, from his eternal, electing love given us a new heart, a heart to love him; so that, in this sense, his love to us, which is first, even from eternity, is the cause of our love to him. This is a certain truth, and these words are as well adapted to express it as any that can be thought of. Our Savior, speaking of the same thing, viz., the love and friendship between his disciples and himself, expresses it in different words. He says to them, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;" i. e., my previous choice of you to be my disciples and friends has been the reason of your becoming my friends and followers, as you never would have become my friends had I not brought it about; so you now love me, and are become my friends, because I first loved you, looked you up, and called you by my influences and grace. What the apostle plainly means to assert here is, that in the work of redemption, in which a reconciliation is brought about between God and man, and a mutual love and friendship takes place, God is the first mover, and not man. This is the theme he is upon, as appears by the tenth verse: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." God is first in his

love to man, by which he has provided a Mediator; and then, by his motion and influences, brings men to love him. And thus we are brought into this friendship, and love God and the Savior, not as first moving in the affair ourselves, but because God first loved us. The devil knew that such a selfish religion is not true religion, but is an argument that a man is really a wicked man, and an enemy to God; therefore he said, in order to set Job in a bad light, and insinuate that the character God gave of him, as an upright man, did not belong to him, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" etc.; q. d., "Job is wholly selfish and mercenary in what he does, and has no true respect and love to God, nor is really his friend; for all the love and service he renders to God is grounded on God's love and kindness to him and the good he gets by it. Therefore, only take away these tokens of love and goodness, and his love will wholly cease, and he will turn an enemy to God." And God implicitly grants that, if this was the case with Job, he was not worthy the character he had given him; therefore proceeds to put this matter to the trial. Woe to the person whose love and friendship to Christ is built on no better foundation than this! When the trial comes he will be found wanting, even just such a one as the devil would have him be — a real and confirmed enemy to Jesus Christ.

Let every one, then, who is inquiring whether he is a true friend to Christ or not, see to it that he does not deceive himself here, while all his love and affection is only a selfish thing, arising wholly from a thought and belief that Christ is his friend, and not consisting in any true sense of his worthiness, superlative excellence and beauty. The true friends to Christ love and esteem him, are pleased with his person and character, and are friendly and benevolent to him, rejoicing in his honor and happiness, independent of his love to them; and, therefore, if he should cast them off forever, and their character continue the same, this would not destroy their love to him, but they would, notwithstanding this, continue his hearty friends, even under the highest tokens of his displeasure, could he do this consistent with his true character.

2. The true friends of Christ are submissive and obedient to him.

There is no true principle of obedience but love; and just so far as this takes place, there is a spirit of obedience. So far as one is a true friend to another he is devoted to his service, and is at his beck, especially if he is his superior and has a right to dictate and command. And with what freedom and pleasure do we strive to serve and please our dear friends! This is no task, but a privilege. What

influence, then, will true love and friendship to Christ have in this respect! With what sweet delight do they devote themselves to him, looking on his service as the greatest privilege and happiness that they can conceive of! They long to be all submission and obedience to him, from a sense of the sweetness and pleasure of it. As soon as they become friends to him, they are reconciled to, and pleased with, all his institutions, commands, and ways. They esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be perfectly right. They will meditate on his precepts, and have respect to all his ways; yea, they will delight themselves in his statutes, and rejoice in the way of his testimonies, more than in all riches. They well understand the Psalmist when he says, "I opened my mouth, and panted, for I longed for thy commandments." They are not disposed to pick and choose for themselves, but are ready to sign a blank, and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" With this disposition they read God's word, desiring to find what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of Christ. They are not offended at the cross, or scared at the prospect of sufferings for their dear Lord and Master, but are ready to look upon this as a great privilege and happiness. All this is the natural, and even necessary, attendant of true friendship to Christ. This our dear Lord has expressed repeatedly in the strongest terms. His words are, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. If a man love me, he will keep my words. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

There are many professed friends of Christ who are found wanting, yea, essentially defective, when tried by this plain, infallible rule, which is most insisted on of any in the Word of God, as the best rule of trial. They have, it may be, at times, had some uncommon motions and affections of soul, as they fondly think, towards Christ; and in these they rest as a sure evidence that they are become friends to him. But what is the fruit in their life and conversation? Why, it may be truly said of them, they profess great love and friendship to Christ, but in works they dishonor and deny him. They call him Lord and Master, but do not the things that he says; therefore, we may be sure they are not his friends; that all their affection, love, and joy, however high it rises, is of a spurious kind, and has nothing of the nature of true love to Christ.

Look well to yourselves in this point, my friends. Flatter not yourselves that you are friends to Christ, unless you are wholly devoted to his service, and are, with great exactness and conscientious care, labor, and watchfulness, attending upon whatsoever he has commanded, and avoiding all that he has

forbidden, in thought, word, and deed; at the same time not counting this a task, but a privilege, from which you never desire to be released.

3. If persons are the true friends of Christ, their obligations to him appear exceeding great to them.

It is the nature of true friendship to operate thus. This, above all things, tends to make persons sensible of the obligations they are under to their friend, and to be ready, and even delight, to acknowledge them. The more we esteem and love any one, the greater does his kindness to us appear, and the more are we affected with it, and, consequently, the more sensible shall we be of the obligations we are under to him, and the more shall we be pleased and delighted in being thus obliged.

This takes place in the friendship we are now considering to a degree beyond any parallel. No obligations in the universe are so great as those of Christ's friends and servants to him. They are enhanced to an amazing degree, and become infinite every way. They are enough to fill the soul with wonder and astonishment, and swallow up all thought. And his friends are not without a sense of this. They feel themselves bound to Christ by the strongest ties, which are beyond all expression. He has bought them by his own precious blood; and what obligations do they acknowledge themselves to be under, to be wholly and forever devoted to him, with the utmost strength of their hearts!

If you are the friends of Christ, this has been often a very affecting theme to you. You have felt and acknowledged your obligations to Christ with an ardor of soul inexpressible, and with a great degree of sweetness and delight. And you have said, many a time, "What shall I render to the Lord and Savior for all his benefits?" And you have found you had no returns to make answerable to the immense obligations you are under to him. This leads to observe, —

4. The friends of Christ never think they have done enough for him, but always, in their own view, come vastly short of what they owe to him.

This is always the attendant of true friendship among men, especially where one is a great friend to another who is much his superior every way, and to whom he is under great and peculiar obligations. He is not afraid of doing too much for his friend; but always comes short of what he would be glad to do, being ready to purpose and do more than he does. And he is not apt to magnify what he has done, and think he does a great deal, as he does it with so much pleasure, and his obligations appear so great; but he is disposed to think it little,

or even nothing; and if his friend appears to take great notice of it, he is ready to wonder at it, and think he greatly magnifies it. He thinks he is to blame that he has done no more, and is uneasy with himself on this account, and wonders that such notice should be taken of what he has done.

But, in the case before us, this takes place in a higher degree than in any other; as the Christian's friend is so much more worthy and excellent than any other, and he is under so much greater obligations to him, and his defects and short comings are so much greater and more aggravated than in any other case. All the Christian does, and renders to Christ, sinks into nothing, in his view; and he looks upon it as amazing condescension in Christ to take any notice of it, or accept it. He can heartily and feelingly espouse the language of a certain great friend of Christ, who was once in our world, but is now in heaven with him: "What I would, that I do not; and what I would not, that I do." I am infinitely in debt to my glorious friend, but pay nothing. All the returns I make to him are so little, and so much below the obligations I am under, that they are altogether unworthy his notice. O, that I could give away to him my whole self forever, in one pure, constant, ardent flame of love! And even this would be so little, worthless a gift, that it is great grace and condescension in him to accept it. If I was called to the greatest sufferings in his cause, and to lay down my life for him, this I should count the greatest privilege; but how little would this be towards paying the debt I owe! how little, compared with what he has done for me!

There are many professed Christians who naturally think they do a great deal for Christ, and that he is much in debt to them for it; while they are really doing little, compared with what many others do. And the very reason why they have so high an opinion of what they do is, because they count Christ's service hard, and, at bottom, have no true love to him. But the true friends of Christ, from the great love they have to him, are disposed to look upon all they can do or suffer for him as little or nothing.

5. The friends of Christ are ready to espouse his cause at all times, let it cost them what it will.

This is the nature of true friendship; it will lead persons always to appear on the side of their friend, to espouse his cause, and promote his interest. Solomon observes, that a friend loveth at all times. This is applicable to the case before us; a true friend of Christ loveth at all times, is ready to stand up in his cause, and espouse his interest, let who will oppose it. He is not ashamed of his friend, and will not

account his name, estate, or his life dear to him, if he is called to give any or all of them up, to testify his love to Christ. He is tenderly affected and hurt when Christ is slighted and dishonored, and will do all he can to wipe off the reproach. And, if Christ must be dishonored and reproached, he is willing to suffer reproach with him; and desires not to fare better in the world than Christ and his cause do.

6. The true friends of Christ desire and long to have others become his friends.

Their benevolence to Christ and to their fellow-men will both influence to this. They want all should love and honor Christ, out of love and benevolence to him; and they earnestly desire that others may enjoy the happiness of this friendship, as friends to them. Under the influence of this, they are praying for others, that they may be brought to know Christ, and so become his real friends and servants; and they are taking all the proper ways they can think of to recommend Christ to others, both in words and conduct, by holding forth light, and matter of conviction of his worth and excellence.

7. The true friends to Christ know that they are naturally enemies to him, and continue to have a great degree of opposition and enmity in their hearts to him even now.

There are many professed Christians who are insensible that they are, or ever were, in any degree, real enemies to Christ. They think mankind in general, and themselves in particular, are much misrepresented and abused, if any one declares them to be naturally enemies to Christ. This, we are obliged to think, is owing to their not being real friends to Christ. If they were, they could not be so insensible of that which opposes him. It is no wonder that he who is not a friend to Christ should be blinded in this matter, and wholly overlook his opposition and enmity to Christ; but that a true friend to him should be thus blinded is perfectly unaccountable, and even impossible. All sin is most direct opposition to Christ, and enmity against him, whether it be in us or in others. But the Christian world is full of sin, and all men are naturally wholly given to it, and, therefore, really hate Christ; and even his best friends in this world have a great degree of corruption, and many sinful exercises of heart; and all this is real enmity to Christ, it being not the less so because they have a degree of love to Christ. Therefore, it seems impossible that a friend to Christ should be insensible of this.

When any one has no true love and friendship for another, but greatly undervalues, dislikes, and hates him, and yet imagines he is his true friend, he must, of consequence, be in a great degree stupid and blind to the slight and contempt that

is cast upon him, and will naturally think he is treated well enough, and may look upon that as an act of respect to him in which really a slight is put upon him, and is an act of enmity against his true character. But he who is a true friend to another, and esteems, honors, and loves him to a great degree for what he is in himself, and in a view of his true character, will be quick to discern and feel every slight that is put upon him, and every thing that opposes his character. So it is in this case; the true friend of Christ knows the whole world lies in wickedness, and that all men are naturally in arms against Christ, and are proclaiming their enmity against him; that he himself is naturally a rebel and enemy to him; and that there is a great degree of the same thing in his heart now, of which he shall never be wholly cured, till he is perfectly cured of all sin. In this view, the friends of Christ loathe and abhor themselves, humble themselves before him, and lie in the dust at his feet, judging and condemning themselves, acknowledging their own guilt and ill desert, and exceeding vileness and odiousness, and feeling themselves wholly without the least excuse. They know that the carnal mind, even every thing that is in man naturally, is enmity against Christ, and that the friendship of this world is enmity against him; that they are no further friends to Christ than they are new creatures, having put off the old man with his lusts, and put on the new man; and, O, how do they long for deliverance from this body of sin and death, to be perfectly like Christ, and turned into a pure, holy flame of perfect love to him!

8. The true friends of Christ think much of him, and his name is as ointment poured forth, having a sweetness and fragrancy, which often fills their hearts with a holy warmth and fervor, and sweet, heavenly delight.

Our dearest friends have always a place in our hearts; we are apt to have them much in our thoughts; every thing about us, and every occurrent, almost, will suggest the idea of them to our minds, which we are apt to carry with us wherever we go.

And surely there is something like this in the friendship we are considering. No person has reason to think he is a friend to Christ unless he thinks much of him, and the pleasing idea he has formed of him is apt to be present and is familiar to him.

The friend of Christ has really more concern with him than with any other person in the universe, and more passes between him and Christ than between any one else. To him his heart naturally goes out, when alone, in exercises of love, devotion, and prayer; and of him he thinks much, even in

company, for none can so divert him as to erase the sweet idea of his best beloved from his mind; and whatever he does, in word or deed, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Christ is in him the hope of glory, and the life he lives is a life of faith on the Son of God.

9. The friends of Christ do trust in him wholly for righteousness and strength. They trust in his merit and worthiness only to recommend them so as to find acceptance with the Father of the universe, and to all that favor they need. They know they have no worthiness of their own, but infinitely the reverse of it; that they are in themselves most unworthy, odious, and ill deserving; and they know that Christ has merit and worthiness enough to recommend them, and they see wherein it consists. Their knowledge of the true character of Christ, and sense of his worthiness, excellency, and amiableness, in which their love and friendship to him consists, is a sufficient foundation for their trust in him to recommend them to the offended Lawgiver. They see the reason why he is so worthy and acceptable to the Father, and do not wonder that he is ready to pardon and show the greatest favors to those who are his friends, and for whom he has undertaken as their friend and patron, interposing and employing his merit and worthiness in their behalf. They, therefore, see the safety there is in relying upon him for this, however unworthy they are in themselves; that they need nothing but to be united to him, so that he shall be their friend, and properly espouse their cause, in order to have all the favor they want, and to be "accepted in the beloved." And the higher their love and friendship to Christ arises, and the greater sense they have of his excellency and worthiness, the more strongly do they rely upon him for righteousness — the more clearly do they see the propriety, wisdom, and glory of this way of the sinner's finding acceptance with God, and with the more cheerfulness and delight do they trust in him, "desiring to be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." In short, the more they love Christ, the more fully do they see their destitution of all righteousness and worthiness of their own, yea, the infinite distance they are from any such thing, even their infinite vileness and ill desert; and the more clearly do they behold the sufficiency of his worthiness to recommend them, and the more pleased are they with being saved in this way, as the wisest and most sweet and excellent of any they can imagine.

If a person wants a favor of any one, which he has forfeited, and of which he is utterly unworthy, having justly incurred his highest displeasure, and there is another, a third person, whom he highly esteems and loves, and knows he is most worthy and acceptable in his eyes, whose favor he wants, he will naturally desire that this his beloved friend should espouse his cause, and interpose the influence and merit he has with the offended person, to procure his pardon and favor. And if he knows that this his much-esteemed and most dear friend has actually undertaken thus to mediate in the behalf of offenders, and in this work has done much to please and honor the offended, injured person, even enough more than to countervail the injury and damage he had sustained, he will naturally rely wholly upon his merit and worthiness with the offended person for that acceptance and favor he wants. And his receiving it in this channel, wholly by the interposition, merit, and worthiness of his highly-esteemed and well-beloved friend, will render it doubly sweet to him, at the same time that it will greatly endear to him his very worthy friend. And hence we may observe, that it is agreeable, not only to the practice of mankind in such cases, but to the reason and nature of things, that such a friend should, by his merit with the offended person, procure pardon and favor to the offender who applies to him and trusts in him to do such a kind office for him; and that it may be reasonable and proper that such a favor should be given him purely out of respect to the merit and worthiness of his friend to whom he is united, and in whom he trusts for this, which it would not be proper and wise to grant in any other way.

Thus the friend of Christ sees that "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake," and says, with unspeakable satisfaction and pleasure, "In the Lord have I righteousness;" yea, with immensely more pleasure than the angels have in being accepted in their own righteousness. And the honor and glory that the Mediator, their dearest friend, has, by thus becoming the righteousness of his people, and procuring pardon and acceptance for them, is exceeding satisfactory and pleasing to his friends. They are abased and humbled to the lowest degree, and made to take their proper place, in a sense of their own infinite unworthiness and guilt. Christ, their friend, is exalted, as having merit and worthiness with God sufficient to cancel their guilt, and recommend them to the greatest dignity and blessedness. And with this they are well pleased, and rejoice to take their own place, sink down low at the foot of Christ, and to exalt and honor their glorious Friend and Redeemer. And in this way they, at the same time, exalt and honor themselves in the highest degree.

They who are at heart in no degree friendly to Jesus Christ never thus trust in him for righteousness, nor can they be reconciled to this method of pardon and salvation. Whatever profession they may make, and however orthodox they are in speculation, they do not really understand this matter; it is foolishness unto them, and their whole hearts do in all their exercises most directly and strongly oppose it, and they are, at bottom, seeking after righteousness, as it were, by the works of the law. The friends of Christ trust wholly in him also for strength, by which they may persevere in love and friendship with him, being sensible that they have no sufficiency of their own, and that there is not the least ground of dependence on themselves. In this sense, they go through this wilderness to the world above, leaning on their Beloved, knowing that though of themselves they can do nothing, yet, through Christ strengthening them, they can do all things.

IV. Let what has been said on this subject be improved to recommend Jesus Christ to all as the best friend, and as a motive to enter into friendship with him, and make him their friend, without delay.

You have been attending to the unspeakable privileges and blessedness of this friendship; you have had enough laid before you abundantly to convince you that this is the most important and happiest friendship in the universe; that they are indeed blessed and made happy forever who are true friends to Jesus Christ. They enjoy a much higher degree of happiness in this world than any other persons ever did, or ever can do.

And you are all now invited into this friendship who have hitherto lived strangers to it; you are none of you excluded, but Christ is offered to you all in the character of an almighty and most excellent friend, and nothing is wanting but the free consent of your hearts to give yourselves up to him in this character, become friends to him, cleave to him, and love him, in order to his being your friend. You cannot fail of having him your friend but by rejecting the most kind offer he makes to you. If, therefore, any under the gospel perish at last for want of an all-sufficient Friend, who is able and ready to do all for them they can want, even in the most extreme case, and is infinitely the best, most sweet and excellent friend in the universe, it must be because they have persisted through their whole life in refusing his kind offer to be their friend, and pressing invitations, urged by the strongest motives imaginable, to choose him as their friend.

All that has been said on this interesting, pleasing subject conspires to show the folly and misery of such. But to all

this a few words more may be added, in an address to such who have hitherto rejected this heavenly Friend.

Consider how happy they must be who have entered into this friendship, who love, and are beloved by, such an infinitely excellent and amiable friend. Much has been said in the preceding discourses to set forth the happiness of such. But the particular consideration which is suited to lead you to conceive of this matter is the happiness of other friendships; at least, the happiness which men are eagerly seeking and pursuing in them.

The blooming, sprightly youth commonly sets out soon in the eager pursuit of happiness in love and friendship. For this he has the most keen taste, and can conceive of no higher enjoyment than this. To love and be beloved by a friend which he shall choose out from all the rest of mankind, and prefer to all the rest — to enjoy such a friend in the most agreeable circumstances is the height of all felicity, in his view. And even the hope and prospect of it will give a degree of high enjoyment, such as it is, and prompt him to go through almost any difficulty and hardship, in order to be united with, and enjoy, such a friend.

Your observation and experience with respect to this may serve to convince you of the exalted happiness of the friendship I am inviting you into. What are all the excellences and charms, either of body or mind, of the most lovely persons on earth, compared with those of Jesus Christ? You want nothing but a taste and relish for his beauties in order to lower your relish for all mere human friendships, and to make you long for real enjoyment in the most noble and substantial friendship; and the highest enjoyment of earthly lovers (to obtain which they would be willing to give away all the riches of both the Indies) would appear to you to be mean trash, a low, despicable, fading nothing. They who, in a high taste for friendship, are pursuing happiness in earthly loves, are always disappointed in a greater or less degree. Either they never get possession of the beloved object, or, if they do, they find not those excellences they expected, having greatly overrated them in their imaginations, or the enjoyment does not answer their expectations, and the happiness they find is short lived, and attended with many troubles and undesirable things, and soon dies away. And often the short-lived comfort gives place to a keen and lasting misery, which leaves the poor creature in absolute despair of that happiness which had been expected and so eagerly sought after. But in the friendship now proposed to you, your highest expectations shall be immensely outdone. The enjoyment of your friend shall not

fade, but increase. You will find his beauty and excellency greater than you conceived, and that the one half was not told you. You shall exist in the bloom and vigor of eternal youth. Your taste for love and friendship shall not die, but increase, and be a thousand times as high and keen as that of the most passionate, doting, earthly lover; and this shall be completely satisfied in the enjoyment of your beloved under all imaginable advantages, and with every desirable circumstance, while his beauties shall sparkle in your eyes, and more and more charm and fill you with unutterable transports of the most solid and lasting joy, and he will give himself wholly to you forever.

O, let them who have a high relish for earthly love and friendship improve this to help their conceptions of the happiness, of the love and friendship, now recommended; and let them hence be excited to seek after this enjoyment, by choosing Jesus Christ as their friend! Let them know that it is only because their taste is vitiated and perverted that they are not pursuing this love with as much eagerness and high expectation as the fond youth is hurried on in earthly amours.

And let the *youth*, in particular, be invited into this friendship. It is pity the morning of your days, the bloom and vigor of life, should be spent in the eager pursuit of that which will not profit, but end in disappointment and misery. It is pity you should not give yourselves up to Jesus Christ, the heavenly friend, in your early days, and let him have your first love. He is calling upon you to give your hearts to him in this noble and exalted friendship. You shall find all the sweetness in this that you expect, and are pursuing elsewhere, and ten thousand times more. And this shall sweeten all other friendships to you that are worthy to be desired and pursued. This will lay a foundation for a virtuous, noble friendship with others, which shall grow more and more refined and sweet, and shall end in something happy and glorious, beyond all our present conceptions.

Again: consider the base ingratitude and wickedness there is in slighting and rejecting the offers of this friendship with Jesus Christ, and the dreadful consequence of it. If you do not enjoy all the blessings of this friendship, it will be wholly your own fault, and the consequence will be unutterable misery. You must answer for the wickedness you are guilty of in rejecting Christ, which is in proportion to his greatness, worthiness, and excellence, his kindness and love, and the happiness you hereby refuse. You are spurning at, and trampling upon, the most tender love of the most worthy and excellent personage, who offers to receive you into the embraces of the

dearest love. And O, what will be the consequence of this? Why, Christ, the great and celebrated friend, who now offers to take you into a dear and everlasting friendship, and become your most loving friend forever, if you will consent to it, will become your peculiar and greatest enemy; yea, your implacable enemy forever. He will hate you, and heap mischiefs on your head, without the least degree of pity or regard to your interest. He will cast you into outer darkness, and tread you down in his wrath and trample you in his fury. His hatred, wrath, and vengeance towards you will be great and dreadful in proportion to his love and kindness to his friends. And all his friends will most heartily join with him in this; and not one of them will exercise the least love and pity towards you. All your friendships you are entering into and pursuing now will wholly cease soon, and turn into the most tormenting hatred and enmity. The higher your love and friendship with others rises, which is consistent with your being enemies to Christ, and the more connections you have with such, the greater enemies and plagues will you be to one another forever. And the time will soon come when you shall know you have not a friend in the universe, and that you yourself know not, nor ever will know, what true friendship means; being justly cursed, and given up to an unfriendly heart, full of pride, hatred, envy, malice, revenge, cursing, and bitterness, in consequence of your refusal to enter into a friendship with Jesus Christ. Consider how hard and cutting it is now to be hated and have the ill will of others, and find yourself friendless when in calamity and distress, and you stand in need of help; and let this teach you a little what you must feel if you ever come to the case just described. And as you would avoid all this evil, of which we can have but a faint idea now, be persuaded to attend to the most kind offer which Christ makes to you. O, run, *fly* into his arms, which are now stretched out to you, and he will embrace you forever. Are you in the utmost danger of sinking into hell; his almighty, everlasting arms shall be underneath you, to hold you up, and raise you to the highest heavens. Are you most miserable and wretched; run to Christ, and he will deliver you out of all trouble, and effectually secure you from all evil; yea, he will turn evil into good, and bring the greatest good to you out of the greatest calamity and evil. He is, in the most eminent sense, the friend and brother who was *born for adversity.* He is able and ready to help in the most adverse, evil case, where no other friend can help and deliver. This is his peculiar work, and which is his glory. He is anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to preach

deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those that are bruised, to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

O, how much do you want such a friend as this! How miserable must you be without him! What a comfort will such a friend be in the various calamities in this life! His name is as a strong tower; the righteous, his true friends, run into it, and are safe. How much will you want such a friend, when you come to die! one who has conquered death, and taken away his sting, and turned him into a friend to his people; and over such the *second death* shall have no power. What have you to object against entering into this friendship without delay? Have you any objections against Christ, as not being such a one as you want and desire? O, let not one of you say so! How shall we bear to have our dearest and most excellent friend thus spoken against, and set at nought! O ye friends of Christ, do not your hearts bleed when your best-beloved friend is thus contemned and wounded? And do you not pity these poor, deluded creatures, who are thus abusing the kindest friend of sinners, to their own eternal ruin? Surely this is the language of your hearts, O sinners! You have a thousand objections against him. He has, in your eyes, no form nor comeliness, no beauty, that you should desire him; therefore he is despised and rejected by you.

Or do you object against yourselves, as too mean, guilty, and unworthy to be received and loved by such a friend, so that it would be presumption in you to think of entering into such a near union and friendship with him? This objection is altogether groundless; was it not so, he never would have admitted one of the fallen race into this happy, high, and noble friendship; for this objection, if it were one, lies with infinite weight and strength against them all. Do you find that Christ has any where made this objection against any, in his word? Surely no; so far from this, that he has done and said every thing he possibly could, to show that this is not the least objection with him, and never did, nor ever will, make it against the most vile, guilty wretch among mankind, who is willing to be his friend, and chooses him for his Friend and Redeemer. Your guilt, vileness, and misery will be many ways an advantage to this peculiar friendship, as has been shown; and will be so far from being a dishonor to this glorious Friend of sinners, though he take you into the nearest and dearest relation and friendship with himself, that it will

turn greatly to his honor and glory. Let this, then, rather be an argument with you to give yourselves up to him without delay, as your almighty, wonderful, excellent Friend.

V. Let the professed friends of Jesus Christ be hence led seriously to consider their distinguishing privileges and high and peculiar obligations. Your profession and calling is a holy, high, and heavenly one indeed. How amazingly dreadful to be found at last, after all your profession and hopes, those to whom Christ will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!" O, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure! Cleave to this infinitely excellent and glorious Friend with your whole hearts, and in all your ways. O, love him, and he will love you; he will manifest himself unto you, in all the wonders of his love and grace; he will come unto you, and take up his abode with you. Shall the friends of Christ suffer themselves to get at a distance from him, and let their hearts sink down into a great degree of indifference and coldness towards him? Shall they cleave and bow down to some other friend which courts their affections? Shall they turn away from him, and seek to make friendship with this world, which is enmity against Christ? If there are any such, they may, with great propriety, be addressed in the words of Absalom to Hushai: "Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why wentest thou not with thy friend?" What fault have you found in him, that you treat him so? Are you not, in a sense, betraying him into the hands of his enemies? Shall he be thus wounded in the house of his professed friends?

O, hearken to his sweet and charming voice, while he calls to you in such melting language as this: "Look unto me, my spouse, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Return unto me, for I am married unto you. Hearken, O daughter, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." O, if you have a spark of true love and friendship for him, how can you forbear saying, and resolving with your whole heart, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now"? Take with you these words, and turn to the Lord, your Friend and Redeemer; say unto him, "Take away all our iniquity, and receive us graciously into thy favor and the most kind embraces of thy love; so will we render thee our whole souls in the most ardent love, gratitude, and praise." He will then heal your backslidings, and love you freely.

Let the dear friends of Christ hold fast their profession without wavering, and follow on to know the Lord. Cleave

to him, let it cost you what it will; and hold yourselves in readiness to part with all, even your own lives, for him. If ye suffer in his cause as his friends and followers, happy are ye. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for his sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love to Christ and to one another. If ye be indeed risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; and when Christ, the chief Shepherd and your Friend, shall appear, you shall appear with him in glory; and ye shall receive a crown of everlasting glory, and reign with him in his kingdom forever. AMEN.

THREE SERMONS:

THE

DECREES OF GOD

THE

FOUNDATION OF PIETY.

THREE SERMONS.*

SERMON I.

I know that, whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doth it, that men should fear before him. — Ec. iii. 14.

We may be sure that the infinitely great, eternal, omniscient Being, who is the First and the Last, the Almighty, does nothing for an end, or with a view to accomplish any design, which is temporary and shall wholly cease and come to nothing, so that every thing which remains shall, in all respects, be just as it would have been had he not done it. For this would be infinitely unworthy of such a Being, infinitely beneath him, and unbecoming his character; it would be really more unbecoming and trifling than for a man to do all he does through life for no end at all, were this possible, or for the greatest monarch on earth to spend his life in action for no higher and more important ends than those which children have in what they do. That which ceases to exist in all its effects and consequences, so that the universe is in no respect better or otherwise than if it had not been, is of infinitely less worth and importance than that of which the consequence and good effect, or the end of which, is without end, or forever. Therefore, the infinitely great, wise, and good Being will do nothing but that which shall answer an end which never shall cease, so that the consequence and good effect of it shall exist forever.

If this visible world were to cease to exist, and every effect and consequence of its having existed were to cease forever, — so that no end were to be answered by it but what took place during the existence of it, and no existence, or circumstance of existence, should be in any respect otherwise than if it had not existed, — it would have been created and preserved during

* Written in the year 1789.

the existence of it, in a great measure, if not altogether, in vain. It is certain no end would be answered worthy of the infinite Creator. There would really nothing be gained by such a work; all would be lost. Therefore, we may be sure that none of the works of God are of this kind, but every thing that he does will, in the effect and consequence of it, exist forever, or the end to be answered by it will never cease.

The natural world which we behold, with all the works of man in it, is to come to an end — at least as to the form in which it now exists — when the end of the existence of it is answered, but that end which was designed to be accomplished by the creation and continuation of the existence of it will remain forever. The natural world, the sun, moon, and stars, with this earth, and all the creatures and things contained in them which are not capable of moral agency and moral government — the natural world was created, and is upheld, for the sake of the moral world, and those creatures which are capable of moral government and of conformity to God in moral exercises, as a house is built, not for its own sake, but for the sake of those who are to live in it; and when this world, having answered the end with respect to the moral world for which it was made and preserved, shall be burnt up, the moral world, and all moral agents, will continue forever, with all the effects and consequences of the natural world, respecting the moral world, which were designed to be produced by creation and providence.

Hence it is demonstrably certain that moral agents, at least some of them, (and if some, why not all?) will exist without end; for they cannot answer the end of their existence, and the end of all those works of God which he has done for their sake, if they should cease to exist; they must, therefore, exist forever.

It will appear evident and certain, no doubt, if duly considered, that moral government cannot be perfectly or properly exercised unless it be endless, and, consequently, unless moral agents, the only subjects of this government, continue to exist forever. This is evident from the text we are considering and what has been observed upon it. But the evidence of this arises from another view of this point. Moral government cannot be exercised without a law pointing out and requiring the duty of moral agents, and fixing the penalty of disobedience, and maintaining and executing this law, agreeably to the requirements and sanctions of it. The punishment which a transgression of the divine law deserves is endless evil or suffering; and, therefore, this must be the penalty of the law of God, and must be executed on the transgressor, unless some-

thing can take place to answer the same end; therefore, he upon whom this penalty is executed must exist forever, in order to suffer the penalty of the law; and although it be not essential to the law of God that there should be an express promise of endless life to the obedient, yet the threatening of evil to the transgressor seems to imply favor to the obedient, and is inconsistent with putting an end to their existence, and depriving them of endless happiness, which in their view, and in reality, would be an infinite negative evil; and, therefore, must be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, yea, with his distributive justice, for they deserve no evil, so long as they continue obedient. Therefore, nothing but transgression can put an end to the existence and happiness of a moral agent; it hence follows, that they who persevere in obedience must exist happy forever, and they who transgress must suffer evil without end; consequently, every moral agent must exist forever, in order to the proper and full exercise of moral government. Therefore, whatever God does respecting moral agents (and he has respect to these in all he does) in this sense shall be forever; he has a view to an endless duration, and aims at an end which never shall cease, but must exist forever.

It has been observed, that the moral world is the end of all God's works, and that the subjects of moral government must exist forever; and that, in this sense, all that God does shall be forever. But the subjects of moral government, and all the events that immediately relate to them, do not comprehend all the moral world; God himself must be considered as included in this everlasting, moral kingdom, as the supreme Head and eternal King of it; and he, being infinitely greater, more important, and worthy of regard than any or all creatures, must, therefore, be the end of all that is done; that is, he must make himself the highest and last end, and do all for himself, as the Scripture asserts: "The Lord hath made all things for himself." The exercise, manifestation, and display of his own perfections and glory must be the supreme end of all the works of God, which necessarily includes the greatest possible happiness of the obedient subjects of his moral kingdom, which, therefore, must be forever, or without end; for a temporary display of the divine glory, and the temporary happiness and glory of the moral kingdom of God, would be infinitely less than an eternal and increasing duration of these, and nothing in comparison with this. In this view, we see how whatsoever God doth is forever. His design in all he does is his own glory in his everlasting kingdom. This is his end, and the issue of all is this, which shall have no end. The

kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom, and of his dominion and glory there will be no end, which is abundantly asserted in Scripture, we all know; and this kingdom, glory, and dominion is the end of all God's works. Therefore, every thing he doth shall be forever; it hath no end in his design, and in the effect and consequence. Nothing can be more certain than this.

2. It is asserted in these words that God has fixed a plan of operation, including all his works, all he doth or will do in time and to eternity, and that he is executing this plan or design in all he doth; all his works having reference to this, and being included in it. This is implied in the former particular. For if in all God doth he hath respect to that which is endless, he must have formed a design and fixed a plan of operation which is endless, including all he will do, and all events, to eternity. This the Scripture abundantly asserts. "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Ps. xxxiii. 11.) "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doth." (Job xxiii. 13.) "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv. 18.) And, if we attend to the point, we cannot but know that it must be so, it being impossible that it should be otherwise; for, to suppose the contrary, is to suppose God is changeable, which is inconsistent with infinite perfection, and with his being infallible, and to be trusted in all cases. Indeed, if there were not a Being who is unchangeable, there would be no God. Besides, if God be infinite in power, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness, which he certainly is, then he is able, and could not but fix upon a plan of operation, including all he would do, all his works of creation and providence, without end, or forever. He could not but propose an end of all his works, and lay the wisest plan to accomplish that end. Not to do this must manifest want of wisdom or of ability, and, therefore, would be inconsistent with infinite power and wisdom. It is impossible he should not know what is wisest and best to be done in every instance to eternity; he is able to do it, for nothing can be in the way to prevent his doing it; and it is equally impossible he should be infinitely wise and good, and not fix upon, and execute, the wisest and best plan of operation. Nothing can be more evident and certain than this. Well may we join with Solomon, and say, "We know that, whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever." He has proposed infinitely the best possible end, which cannot be accomplished in time, but by an everlasting series of works; he has fixed

upon the wisest plan to answer this end, and all he doth has reference to this end; and the effect and consequence of all his works, for the sake of which they are done, will remain forever.

Let us now proceed to consider the following words: "Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it." These are part of the same sentence, and have respect to the foregoing, and assert that nothing can be put or added to what God doth, or taken from it. In these words, the following particulars are expressed or implied, which also imply each other: —

1. These words contain a more strong and express declaration than the foregoing: that the divine plan of his endless operations, including every thing which he doth, and will do, to eternity, is unalterably fixed, so that it is impossible that any change or alteration should be made in any respect, or in the least degree. His designs are fixed from eternity. He has determined what he will do, and what he will not do, in every instance, greater or less. And his plan admits of no alteration; nothing can be added to it, or taken from it. It has been observed that this is abundantly asserted in Scripture, and that reason teaches it must be so; and that to deny this, or even doubt it, is to deny or doubt of the existence of a God, supreme, omnipotent, infinitely intelligent, wise, and good.

2. These words imply that all things, and every event, from the greatest to the least, from the first to the last, are included in the divine plan, and are unalterably fixed by the counsel and decree of God. This must be so, unless creatures and things may exist, and events may take place, independent of God, and with which his power and operation has no concern, without the least dependence on his determination and will, and, it may be, contrary to it, which no rational man can admit, as it is absolutely impossible.

If all the works of God are known to him, — which they could not be, unless he had determined and fixed what he will do, — then every thing, every event which shall take place or exist, must be known, and consequently certain, and made so by the divine decree determining what he would do. If any one event, even the least that can take place, were not fixed, but uncertain whether it will take place or not, then what God will do, so far as his works respect that event, must be uncertain, and cannot be known or fixed. Therefore, God, by determining his own works, equally determined and fixed what every creature should be and do, as the latter is necessarily included in the former. The divine will and operation has respect to,

and concern with, every thing, every event, even the least that takes place; and it comes to pass and actually exists by some act of his, without which it could not take place, whether it be in the natural or moral world. The existence, the time and circumstances of the existence, of every bird, even the least, and the time and means of its beginning and ceasing to exist, are all fixed by what God does. Every hair of our heads, and of every head and creature that ever did or shall exist, is made by God. He numbers them all, and orders every circumstance, the growth, length, bigness, use, decay, and loss or disposal of each one. Every tree on the earth, every plant, leaf, and spire of grass he produces by his power, energy, and care. He causes every drop of rain or hail, and every flake of snow that falls, and determines the bigness, the shape, and time of the falling of each one. All these are the work of God, as are innumerable others, whether greater or less. These, therefore, must be all fixed from eternity by him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.

And it is equally certain that every event, and all that comes to pass in the moral world, depend upon the will and determination of God, and could not exist if he determined and did nothing concerning it. Every action of moral agents, and every perception, motion, and every thought which takes place in their hearts or minds, is comprehended in what God doth, and is effected by his power and operation. "The heart of the king," and consequently of all men, "is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will." Every thing in the moral world, even the least motion and thought of the heart, is of unspeakably more importance than the events in the natural world, and are as much dependent on the will and operation of God, and, therefore, must be as much fixed and certain. And this is necessarily implied in God's determining and fixing what he will do, so that there can be no alteration of his plan of operation; nothing put to it, or taken from it, for it comprehends all things, and all events, great and small, which shall take place and exist from the beginning of time to eternity.

Thus certain is it from this text, as well as from innumerable other passages of Scripture, and from the reason and nature of things, that God has, by determining what he would do, necessarily "foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

3. These words assert that the divine plan of operation, which is endless, and includes all things and every event that ever did or shall take place, is the wisest and best that can be; so that to make any alteration in it in any respect or the least degree, to take any thing from it, or add any thing to it, which

is not included in it, would render it less perfect, wise, and good. In this respect, "nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it," without hurting or marring it, and rendering it less perfect, wise, and good; therefore, it is impossible there should be the least alteration, in any thing or circumstance, so long as God is omnipotent, infinitely wise and good. "His work is perfect;" which includes the whole created universe, with every thing, from the greatest to the least, and all events, and circumstances of events, even the most minute and inconsiderable, which take place in time and eternity. It is impossible it should be otherwise, if God be omnipotent, infinitely wise and good. The work of such a Being must be, like himself, *absolutely perfect.* He must know what was the most wise and best plan, and, therefore, the most desirable. He was able to form and execute such a plan, and his wisdom and goodness must be pleased with it; which will answer the best end, and includes all possible good, and excludes every thing which would render it less perfect, and is, on the whole, undesirable. Of this we may be as certain as we can be that there is a God, who is supreme, omnipotent, infinitely wise and good, who hath done, and will do, what he pleases, in heaven and on earth, and in all the created universe, and that *forever.*

Thus we find Solomon asserting, in the words under consideration, what he *knew* to be an important and most evident and certain truth, viz., that God's plan of operation is endless, is unalterably fixed, and comprehends all things and all events which ever exist or take place, and that this divine plan, including all the created universe, and every event and circumstance which will take place to eternity, is most wise and good, being absolutely perfect; so that nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, without making it less perfect and good. This truth is abundantly asserted in divine revelation, and is evident to a demonstration, from the reason and nature of things. And to deny or doubt of it is, in effect, to deny or doubt of the being of a God, who is supreme, infinitely wise and good. This truth is concisely, though fully, expressed by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, in their Shorter Catechism, in the following words: "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained *whatsoever comes to pass.* And *he executeth his decrees* in the works of creation and providence. His works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and *all their actions.*"

This is a doctrine of divine revelation, and most agreeable

to reason, to wisdom, and benevolence; and they who exercise these in any good degree must be pleased with it. For, according to this, nothing does or can take place but that which is wisest and best, and necessary for the greatest general good; every thing and every event, the greatest and the least, being under the direction of infinite wisdom, rectitude and benevolence, and ordained and fixed by these. To have such a plan, which includes all the works of God, and every event, motion, and action in the creation, in time and to eternity, formed by infinite wisdom and goodness, exactly suited to accomplish the best end, including all possible good, and excluding every thing which, on the whole, is undesirable, — to have such a plan, unalterably fixed forever, so that nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, must be most agreeable to the upright, wise, and good; and that person who *understandingly* opposes it, and whose *heart* is displeased with it, must be wholly destitute of all these.

This is suited to please the truly pious mind, to support and comfort such a one, and to excite all those affections and exercises in which true, genuine piety consists. And all the truths and facts included in this divine, unalterable plan are adapted to promote and effect the most perfect virtue, piety, and holiness; and were not this a truth, there could not be any such thing as piety or true religion among creatures.

This leads to consider and explain the concluding words in the text, in which this is asserted: "And God doth it, that men should fear before him."

By the fear of God, fearing him, or fearing before him, which is the same, is meant the exercise of that true piety and religion which is peculiar to good men, and distinguishes them from the wicked. In this sense the phrase is used in numerous places both in the Old Testament and the New, of which every one must be sensible who reads the Bible with attention and care. It is needless, therefore, to mention passages to prove it; I shall, however, cite *one*, which is in this book: "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that *fear God, which fear before him;* but it shall not be well with the wicked, *because he feareth not before God.*" (Ec. viii. 12, 13.)

"*God doth it*, that men may fear before him;" that is, he has formed this wise and perfect plan of operation, which is unalterable, as the proper and only foundation of the exercise of piety and holiness by creatures; and every thing God does in executing this plan is suited to excite and promote this, and bring it to the greater perfection, which is included in his endless design; and holiness shall be exercised in the most

perfect manner and degree, and flourish under the best advantages, in his kingdom, *forever*. This is God's everlasting end, for which he does and orders every thing and event in the universe, viz., his own glory, manifested and displayed in the everlasting holiness and happiness of creatures, in his eternal kingdom. And the existence and knowledge of such a fixed and endless plan of divine operation is the only proper foundation for the exercise of true piety; it is suited to excite the exercise of holiness in creatures; and there cannot be any true piety which is exercised and practised in opposition to this truth, but all true religion is in perfect conformity with it.

This I shall endeavor to illustrate and prove by considering what true piety is, by mentioning the several branches of it in which it is exercised, and, at the same time, showing that these exercises of piety are consistent with this truth, and naturally flow from it, as the proper foundation of them.

1. Love to God is necessarily included in true piety; so that, where there is no degree of this, there is no real religion. Indeed, this comprehends all the exercises of piety, and is the sum and whole of it, as every exercise of piety, called by different names, and differing in some respects, are only different modifications of this same affection of *love*. Therefore, love to God is required, as comprehending every exercise of true piety. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." That is all the affection that is required, as it immediately respects God, and, therefore, includes the whole of true piety. This love consists in benevolence or friendly affection towards God, complacency and delight in him, and gratitude to him. Benevolence regards him as at the head of the universe, infinitely great, omnipotent, and supreme; all the creation being as nothing, compared with him, and absolutely in his hands, and at his control, made and used for him; he being the only necessary and all-important Being, his interest, honor, and glory being the supreme end of all, while he is capable of infinite felicity, and actually possesses it, being unchangeable in his being, perfections, designs, and happiness, infinitely wise, righteous, and good, — I say, benevolence regards God as *such a Being*, and is gratified and pleased in the highest degree in such a character; and the language of the benevolent heart is, "Let God reign forever, in unchangeable felicity and glory; let him be glorified by all things, and his praise be without end; let his counsel stand forever, and let it be impossible that any thing should exist or take place but what he orders, and says, *Let it be*. Be thou exalted, O Lord, above the heavens, and thy

glory above all the earth. Let his infinitely wise, righteous, and benevolent will be done in heaven and earth, and through all his dominions, forever and ever. Amen."

Is it not easy to see, must it not appear with irresistible evidence to all who will calmly attend, that every benevolent friend to God must be pleased that he has laid and fixed an unalterable plan, such as best pleased him, comprehending every thing and all events that are desirable and necessary to answer the best purpose, to eternity, he being, in this, independent and infinitely above the control of creatures; so that it is impossible that it should not take place in every particular and most minute circumstance, just as he has determined from eternity, without a possibility of his being crossed or disappointed in any instance? And is not all this comprehended in the pious, benevolent boast and exultation of the Psalmist: "But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased. For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places"? Such a Being, prosecuting, without a possibility of any mistake or hinderance, such a grand, comprehensive, eternal plan, formed and fixed by infinite wisdom and benevolence, must be the highest possible object of the benevolence of man, and is most perfectly, and to the highest degree, suited to please and gratify such an affection, on which it may expatiate with the highest pleasure, and without limitation as to the object, and with increasing strength forever.

But if there be no such supreme, independent Being, who is able to propose and effect the greatest possible good, and is infinitely engaged to do it, and has laid an unalterable plan, including every thing that is wise and good, and nothing but what is most agreeable to infinite benevolence, the whole being considered together, but many events have already taken place, the existence of which are disagreeable to infinite wisdom and benevolence, all things considered, which are not included in the most wise and benevolent plan, but have taken place independent of God, and exist contrary to his will that they should exist, and so that God will not be so much glorified nor so happy as he would have been had they not taken place, and there would be much less good in the universe forever than there might have been had they been prevented, — then there is no God to be loved, and be the object of benevolent, friendly affection, which shall be completely pleased and satisfied in him. For he must be either impotent and dependent, and unable to effect that which is most agreeable to wisdom and goodness, and, therefore, is disappointed and crossed, if he be

wise and good; or he has no wisdom or goodness, though he is omnipotent, and so has suffered that to take place which was not best on the whole that it should exist, and is contrary to benevolence and wisdom, when he was able to prevent it if he pleased. If the latter were true, all must acknowledge he could not be the object of love, of benevolent, friendly affection. And if the former, and not the latter, were true, all must be sensible that he could not be an object with which benevolent affection can be pleased and satisfied; but if it were exercised towards him, it must be in pity and grief for him, and inextinguishable sorrow, that he was not able to lay and prosecute the best plan without interruption, but is dependent, disappointed, and crossed, and most unhappy, and must be so forever. The benevolent friends to such a Being, and to benevolence, must be crossed and miserable, in proportion to the degree of their benevolence, while the enemies to such a Being, were it possible there could be such a one, (which, blessed be God! it is not,) would be gratified, and triumph; and as such a Being must be infinitely less important and glorious, he must be an infinitely less worthy object of benevolence than he whom the truth we are vindicating describes.

And surely every one who attends properly must see that, on this last supposition, such a Being could not be the object of the complacency and delight of a benevolent heart. This is clear from what has been said respecting benevolence, for pious, holy complacency and delight in an object or character is nothing different from the satisfaction and pleasure which benevolence has in that being or character. Therefore, if there be any thing in a being contrary and displeasing to benevolence, and opposed to what that seeks, it must be equally opposed to complacency and delight, and contrary to it. To suppose the contrary is a flat contradiction.

It is equally apparent that the God who is exhibited in our text, as it has been now understood and explained, must be the first and highest object of complacential love, as it has been shown that he is suited to gratify and please benevolence to the highest degree; for the pleasure which the benevolent heart takes in any object is the same with complacence and delight in that object, as has been just now observed. Therefore, that being or character with which the benevolent heart is most pleased and gratified is the supreme object of complacential love.

The benevolent heart must be pleased with unbounded, infinite benevolence, clothed with omnipotence, fixing and executing an endless plan, including the highest possible good, in which God will be glorified in the highest degree, and his ser-

vants and kingdom most happy and glorious forever, and which admits no evil but that which is necessary to answer the best end, and promote the greatest good, and render the system, the universal plan, infinitely better, more wise and beautiful, than it could be, were the evil excluded. Such a Being, of unchangeable perfection, infinite benevolence, wisdom, rectitude, truth, and faithfulness, must be embraced by the benevolent heart with the warmest and most strong affection; he must be chosen as the supreme good, as the object of the highest complacence and delight. God is exhibited to such a mind as such a Being, and in this amiable light, in forming and executing such a plan, comprehending all possible good, and including every thing that exists, and every event that shall take place to eternity; being exactly suited, in every respect, to manifest and display the divine perfection and glory, in the felicity and glory of his eternal kingdom, and which could not be altered in the least degree, without rendering it less perfect and good. On this Being, and on such a system, including all things that exist, or shall take place — on this absolutely and infinitely perfect Being, and his all-perfect work, the pious mind will dwell with increasing satisfaction and ever fresh delight forever and ever. But were there no unchangeable God, absolutely independent and sovereign, and doing whatsoever he pleases, forming and executing the wisest and best plan of operation to eternity, and including and fixing every event, there would be no such object of supreme affection and delight to the pious, benevolent mind, to be embraced with unreserved love, and unlimited or unalloyed satisfaction and pleasure. Yea, were this God and his plan of operation capable of any possible alteration or change, to eternity, it would give pain to the benevolent heart, and be an eternal impediment to perfect love and happiness.

The person whose heart is wholly selfish, and knows not what disinterested love means, and whose mind is, consequently, contracted down to his own little self, and fixed on his own personal concerns, does not extend his thoughts and affections to those grand objects, the glory of God and the greatest general good of the universe. He really loves nothing but himself, and he cannot be pleased with a God on whom he is wholly dependent, unless he knows, or thinks he knows, that he is wholly devoted to his interest, and will accomplish all his selfish desires and wishes. He must be displeased with, he must hate, a God who is of one mind, and cannot be turned by him; who has fixed his plan of working, including every thing that takes place; and who is unchangeably seeking the greatest general good of the universe, however inconsistent this may

be with his particular interest and happiness; and who will not regard that, but give it up, whenever the greatest public good requires it; being determined, without a possibility of change, to punish forever every persevering enemy to his character and government. Such a creature cannot love any God, unless he will conform to his will, and is, in some measure, at least, dependent on him, and waits on him to know what he will choose and do, independent of God, before he can determine any thing respecting him; so that he himself shall independently turn the scale in every thing that concerns himself; and God must attend him as his tool or servant, to consult his interest and answer his ends. The language of his heart is, "I would not have a God absolutely independent, and unchangeable in his designs and decrees respecting me and my interest. What is the glory of God and the general good to me, if my own personal interest and happiness be not regarded and included — if my selfish inclination and will be not gratified, but crossed? I cannot love such a God." Directly the reverse of this is the feeling and language of the benevolent heart, which has been represented above.

I proceed to consider love as it is exercised and expressed in gratitude; and to show that the God of the Bible, who worketh all things after the counsel of his will, and is executing a plan in the most wise manner, suited to answer the best end, and which comprehends all his works, and every event through endless duration, — that this God is the proper, infinite object of the pious, everlasting gratitude of a benevolent heart. Benevolence or goodness, exercised and expressed, is the only object of true, pious gratitude, and, therefore, it is found nowhere but in a benevolent heart, or, which is the same, in those who are friends to disinterested benevolence. The love of gratitude is essential to disinterested benevolence of a creature, as it is included in the very nature of it, as is the love of complacence, as has been shown. Wherever the benevolent mind sees the exercise of benevolence by any being, he is not merely pleased with it, but exercises gratitude towards that being, and that whether he himself be the object of that benevolence or any other being in the universe. For the benevolent man is a friend to universal being, capable of good; he wishes well to all; therefore, he who regards the good of being in general, and promotes the general good, or expresses his benevolence by doing good to any particular being, is the proper object of grateful love, and such benevolence is suited to excite it, and certainly will do it in every benevolent heart. It hence appears, that as the truth in our text is suited to excite the love of benevolence and complacency to the highest degree, as has been shown, it

will also excite true gratitude, and that every thing contrary to this truth is opposed to the pious love of gratitude.

When the benevolent mind sees Infinite Benevolence designing and effecting the greatest possible good to being in general, and promoting the greatest happiness of the whole, who "is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," and beholds him decreeing, and doing, and causing to be done, every thing that is necessary to answer and effectually secure this end, this eternal purpose, he finds unbounded scope for the highest and most sweet gratitude to this infinitely good Being, who is glorifying himself to the highest degree, and producing the greatest possible happiness in the created universe forever. He gives thanks to God for his infinite goodness manifested in his works, and in his revealed design and fixed plan, including his own glory and the highest good of the created universe. His mind is enraptured in gratitude to God for his regard and benevolence to the sum of all being, Himself, the First and the Last, the Almighty, in that he has made all things for himself, for his own glory, and is unalterably determined, and infinitely engaged, to glorify himself by all his works, and by all creatures, and, in conjunction with this, to effect the greatest possible happiness of the creation. This manifestation of the divine holiness and infinite benevolence is the greatest, the supreme object of the gratitude and thankfulness of the pious, benevolent heart.

And when the pious, good man attends to the infinitely guilty and wretched state into which mankind have fallen, and how exceedingly odious and vile they are, being total and obstinate enemies to God, his law, and government, and violently opposed to all his benevolent designs, and beholds God so loving the world as to give his only-begotten Son to save them, that whoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life, and that a most glorious, happy, and eternal kingdom shall be raised out of the ruins of an apostate world, to the glory of divine grace; and that the greatest good shall be brought out of all the evil that has been or will exist to all eternity, so that the issue shall be infinitely better than if there were no evil; and that this is all included in the eternal plan which was fixed by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, — when all this comes into view, it will excite the most sincere and strong exercises of grateful love, which will continue and increase forever.

And when the pious man attends to the goodness of God to him in particular, and is sensible that it is the effect of God's eternal counsel and his benevolent design of good to him, and that it flows from him on whom he is absolutely

dependent, who orders all things, so that his hand is to be seen in every event that takes place, — all this is peculiarly adapted to excite his grateful love, while he says, "Not unto me, but unto thy name, be all the praise and glory." And what a foundation is here laid for holy, increasing gratitude forever!

Gratitude to God consists in a true sense and pleasing approbation of the goodness of God to universal being and to ourselves, and in making all the acknowledgments and returns of which we are capable, in loving and giving ourselves away to him, to be used for his service, glory, and praise forever.

The man who has no disinterested benevolence, but is wholly selfish, is not capable of the least degree of this true gratitude. He can love those who love him, but this is nothing but self-love, at bottom; for, by the supposition, he seeks himself, and is devoted to none but himself, in all his exercises, and is not pleased with benevolence for its own sake, or any further than he may reap some personal benefit by it, to gratify his self-love. He is displeased with that goodness which passes by him and does good to others, or seeks and promotes the general good.

SERMON II.

I know that, whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doth, it that men should fear before him. — Ec. iii. 14.

These words have been explained in the foregoing discourse, and the truths contained in them have been found to be the following: that God hath, in his wisdom and goodness, by his unchangeable decree, forordained whatsoever comes to pass; that this truth, considered in its extent and consequences, is the only proper and sufficient foundation of the true piety of men.

The last-mentioned truth is now under consideration, and has been in part illustrated and proved, by instancing in true love to God. We now proceed to consider other branches of piety which are included in love and grow out of this root or stock, and may be considered as different modifications of this same love, and to show that God, viewed as described in the text, is the only proper object of them.

2. The fear of God is an exercise of piety. This is put in our text, and in many other places in holy writ, for the whole of true piety, as has been observed. The reason of this doubtless is, because it is in a peculiar manner suited to express the pious exercises of a fallen creature, infinitely vile and guilty, and justly exposed to eternal destruction, into which he will infallibly fall, unless he be rescued by sovereign grace, who, with humility and self-diffidence, knowing that he is wholly lost in himself, trusts wholly in Christ, the only Savior of sinners, whom he has offended, and is constantly offending, yet trusts in him alone, even in his infinite power and sovereign goodness, for pardon, righteousness, holiness, strength, and redemption. And thus it is peculiarly adapted to express the mode or manner of the pious, religious exercises of sinners who believe in Christ and are friends to God and the Redeemer, or the holiness of repenting, believing sinners, that is, real Christians.

It is plain, at the first view, that the God who is represented in our text, in his absolute independence, decrees and works, as it has been explained, is suited to lead men to fear before him, according to this general, comprehensive sense of fear, including the whole of piety; and that all those doctrines which are opposed to this have a contrary tendency, and are not consistent with the fear of God, in this sense of it. But it may, perhaps, give some further light on this subject, by

more particularly considering the fear of God in a more restrained sense, and as a branch of true love or piety.

It is of importance to observe here, that fear is used in different and opposite senses in the Bible, because there are two sorts of fear: one, that which implies holy love, and is essential to true piety; the other is opposed to love, and is, therefore, the fear of those who are not friends to God, but enemies. This latter is intended by fear in the following passages: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John iv. 18.) "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i. 7.) "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.)

These different kinds of fear may be in some measure illustrated by the following instance: An exeellent father has a son and a servant, both of whom have been guilty of injuring him, and have fallen under his just displeasure. The son heartily repents, and loves his father, and is restored to his favor. But he keeps constantly in view the evil which he justly deserves, and which his father is able to inflict; he feels that he depends entirely upon his father's goodness for an escape from that evil, and that he stands in need of his constant aid and assistance to preserve him from offending again and from that evil which he dreads so much. Both his father's displeasure and the evil consequence are dreadful to him. He knows his father is able to punish in the most dreadful manner; he sees some of the family suffering the punishment every day, and others going in the way which will bring it upon them, unless they repent and reform in season, and has feelings answerable to what he sees. He knows he deserves to be thus punished as much as the worst of them, and depends entirely upon his father's goodness to prevent it. He loves his father with all his heart, he approves of his conduct, and knows he does every thing right. He loves to have him supreme and independent in the family, and to have him order every thing, and to see his will done in all cases; he loves to be absolutely dependent upon him, and to have all the family so; and, in the exercise of this love, and in the views now mentioned, he humbles himself before his father, and fears and trembles before him.

The servant who has offended his master fears the rod; he dreads the punishment which is threatened, and knows he can inflict it; but he has no love to the father, his master; he wishes to be out of the family, and not dependent on him in

any degree. He tries to pacify and please his master in his outward conduct, from the love of himself, because he fears the rod, and wishes to escape punishment. Thus he lives in continual *slavish fear* of his master, which disinterested love to him would cast out.

Every one must see the difference between the *filial fear* of the son, who loves his father, and the *servile fear* of the servant, who loves himself only, and the opposition of one to the other. And surely the difference and opposition between the *godly fear* of those who love God with disinterested benevolence, and the servile fear of those who do not love him, but are enemies to him, is much greater, and far more evident and striking.

Here it may be observed, that this *servile fear*, by which men are restrained from a careless, bold practice of open sin, and their attention to a future state, and pressing concern to escape hell and obtain salvation, is excited and kept up, this servile fear is necessarily awakened, and fills the soul with painful concern, when sinners are convinced of the truth of the doctrine in our text, and are made in some measure to feel it to be true. So long as God, in his greatness, omnipresence, and terrible majesty, is not in their view, and they do not feel or see their absolute dependence upon him for all good, and even to escape hell and obtain heaven, but feel as if they had their life in their own hands, in this respect they will not be afraid of God, but live in ease and security. But when they come to feel that they are in the hands of God, and that he will destroy or save them, as he pleases, they being absolutely dependent on him, they will begin to fear and stand in awe of him. And the more fully convinced they are of the truth contained in our text, the greater will be their fear and terror respecting their state and situation. This every one can witness who has been an observer of others in these matters, or has attended to his own feelings. And it may be asked, Where has any person been found, who has disbelieved the doctrine of God's decrees, of his foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass, who has been under any soul-distressing fear of God, or of eternal destruction?

But pious, godly fear implies love to God, in a view of his infinite greatness and importance, and a sense of his infinitely beautiful and glorious character, unchangeably wise, good, upright, just, true, and faithful, having decreed whatsoever comes to pass, and executing his decrees in creating, preserving, and governing all his creatures and all their actions, for his own glory, and the greatest good of the universe; or, which is the same, the greatest happiness and glory of his

eternal kingdom. And this God, who is the supreme object of love, is also the object of pious reverence and fear, as necessarily implied in true love. Thus pious love and fear imply and involve each other, and are really but one and the same affection, which this grand and glorious object is suited to excite. This fear of God implies a view and sense of his greatness and unlimited power, of his unchangeable designs, and our absolute and constant dependence on him, on his will, in every respect, for existence and every motion, and all good, he being our potter, and we the clay in his hand, living, moving, and moved, and having our being in him. It also implies a view and sense of our own infinite vileness and ill desert, and of the infinite evil which God is able to inflict, and may justly bring upon us; and that his almighty power and sovereign grace alone can prevent our being destroyed forever, into which destruction many have fallen, and are falling continually; and that we depend wholly on him, even his sovereign, forfeited mercy, to prevent our going to eternal ruin, and on his constant energy and grace, to cause us to cleave to him and go in the way to heaven, we being nothing but insufficiency and vanity before the infinite, all-sufficient Being; and in this view exercising self-diffidence, humility, and trust, and dependence in God, dreading his displeasure above all things, and submitting to him, with a disposition and desire to obey him in all things, forever. All this is implied in the true fear of God. But it may be expressed in fewer words, and perhaps more clearly to some minds, thus: To fear God is to be properly affected with his infinite greatness and terrible majesty, threatening and punishing his implacable enemies with everlasting destruction; to feel ourselves and all the creation as nothing before him, and wholly dependent upon him; to be suitably affected with our own guilt and vileness, and our absolute dependence on his sovereign, undeserved mercy for pardon, and the renovation of our minds to holy exercises.

The whole of this is expressed or implied in the following passages of Scripture: "Fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." (Luke xii. 5.) All will grant that Christ here enjoins religious, pious fear of God upon all who love him. And God is represented in his terrible majesty as the object of this fear, they being wholly in his hands, and dependent upon him, who is able, and may justly, if he pleases, cast them into hell, and make them miserable forever. Upon this two things may be observed: —

1. That it is here supposed that God does cast some into hell, and inflict eternal evil upon them. For if this could not

be done consistent with his character and perfections, or with his known design, merely his having power to do that which it is known he never will do, and cannot do, consistent with his moral perfection, does not render him more an object of religious fear than if he had no such power; and it would be only an empty bugbear and scarecrow, set up to excite fear without any reason, which cannot be supposed. If no such evil as that of being cast into hell had existence, or ever will be inflicted, in any instance, then it could not be reasonably proposed as an object of fear.

2. If this evil of being cast into hell be a reality, God having power to do it, and actually doing it, whenever and in whatever instances he pleases, — that is, when it is necessary for his glory and the greatest good of the whole, — this represents God as an object of religious fear to those who feel themselves in his hands and deserving of this evil, even when they consider themselves as secured from suffering it, by a divine promise through a Mediator. For still eternal torment in hell is a reality, and they deserve it as much as those who are actually cast into it, and are constantly dependent on God's sovereign will to be saved from it; and their escape from hell, and full, absolute, and unconditional security that they shall not perish, cannot be said to be perfect and completed so long as they are on this side of heaven, in a state of probation, and until they are actually admitted there. Besides, while they, in the exercise of benevolence, behold their fellow-Christians by profession, and their fellow-men, among whom they live, and are uncertain that they will all escape hell, and see them in the hands of God, who casts them into hell, or saves them from this infinitely dreadful evil, as he pleases, they must have a sensation and exercises independent of their own personal concerns, and however secure they may consider themselves, which is properly called the fear of the Lord and of the glory of his majesty. This is, therefore, enjoined upon all the people of God, as included in their pious obedience to him. "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD, then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful," &c. (Deut. xxviii. 58.)

And an affection of this same nature and kind will be exercised by the inhabitants of heaven forever, as necessarily included in love to God, in a view of his glorious, fearful, sovereign power and majesty, and of themselves and all creatures, as being infinitely below him, and as nothing in comparison with him, and wholly dependent upon him for existence, every

motion of their hearts, and all good, and in a clear view of his terrible wrath against sinners, and the dreadful punishment inflicted upon them. This is represented in the fifteenth chapter of the Revelation. John saw seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God; and at the same time he observed the inhabitants of heaven looking on, singing and saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for thy judgments are made manifest." I proceed to mention another passage of Scripture. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Here fear and trembling must mean such exercises of mind as are suitable to their dependence on God and his operating energy for all things, even every motion of their hearts, of will and choice; for this their dependence on God is given as a reason why they should go on in a Christian course with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. They were hanging over hell, and must drop into it, unless supported and rescued by the omnipotent arm of God working in them, and forming them both to will and to do that which was necessary in order to escape hell and obtain heaven, in which God was infinitely above all control, and acted of his own good pleasure, after the counsel of his own will. Here the same idea is held up, and the same truth expressed, with that in our text, as the foundation and reason of man's fearing before God, and working out his salvation with fear and trembling, viz., their absolute dependence on God in all things, even for every thought and motion of heart, which he effectually causes to exist by his invisible, secret, almighty energy, according to his own pleasure, which must be unchangeable, and according to his eternal purpose, including all he would do to eternity in producing every thing, and ordering every event; so that there is but one endless chain of events, made up of innumerable links, of which the least existence, event, and motion, and every circumstance, the most minute, is a necessary part, as well as the greatest, the whole being formed by the wise counsel and will of God, and entirely dependent upon him, and executed by him, and which cannot admit the least possible change or alteration, it being as firmly established and fixed as the existence and throne of the Almighty.

I conclude this head with observing, that it is beyond all controversy certain that the fear of God, as it has been

explained, supposes our dependence on him, viewing him as what he is, and ourselves as what we are; and that the more absolute, perfect, and universal this dependence is, the greater foundation there is for this fear, and this affection will be strong and constant in proportion to the view and sense we have of this dependence. Therefore, the doctrine contained in our text lays the best and most perfect foundation for the exercise of the fear of God, and is every way suited to promote it; and every opinion and sentiment which contradicts this, and represents man as in any degree self-sufficient, and independent in any respect, is contrary to the true fear of God, and tends to prevent or destroy it.

3. An entire, unreserved trust in God is an exercise of true piety, and essential to it. The only foundation for this is his all-sufficiency, his being unchangeable in his goodness, truth, and faithfulness, and omnipotent, supreme, or doing every thing as he pleases, and guiding all things by his constant, universal agency, so as to answer the most wise and best end. Every thing contrary to such a character is inconsistent with his being an object of unreserved trust and confidence to the pious mind. If God were not unchangeable in his attributes and designs; and had he not all creatures and things under his direction and control; and could there be one motion or action in the universe independent of his direction, agency, and will; and did he not know what is the best end, and what are the wisest and best means, to accomplish it; and was he not unchangeably determined what he would do in the exercise of infinite wisdom and goodness, — the benevolent, pious mind would have no foundation of unreserved trust and confidence.

But our God is not so. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." The pious mind, feeling his absolute, entire dependence, and the universal dependence of all things, on this God, whom he loves with all his heart, puts his whole trust in him, and relies upon him with the most unreserved confidence and the greatest satisfaction and pleasure. "He beholds the hand of God conducting all the hidden springs and movements of the universe, and with a secret, but unerring operation, directing every event,"* so as to promote and effect the greatest possible good, his own glory and the greatest happiness of his kingdom, and of all who trust in him, and with pleasure places the greatest and most unreserved confidence in him, and casts all his care upon him. "He rests in the Lord, and waits patiently for him."

* Dr. Blair's Sermons, vol. i. p. 46.

Thus the pious, benevolent man trusts in God to glorify himself by all things and all events that take place, however dark and of a contrary tendency they may appear to him to be; and he implicitly, without seeing how it may be done, relies upon him to bring good, unspeakable good, out of all evil; so that no event shall take place that shall not be best, on the whole, and all shall issue to the greatest advantage to his servants and his eternal kingdom; and he places his hope and trust wholly in this God for all he desires and wants for himself personally and for his fellow-creatures, for body or soul, in time and to eternity; and the language of his heart is that of David, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us." (Ps. lxii. 5.)

In short, this doctrine, inculcated in our text and taught through the whole Bible, being understandingly and cordially received, will pull down and destroy that self-confidence and self-dependence which is natural to man, and with which self-love inspires him: it is levelled directly against the selfishness and pride of man, and suited to cast down every high thing in his heart which exalts itself against the knowledge of God; to exalt God and humble man, and form him to cleave to God and the Redeemer, in a humble trust and dependence on him alone. No wonder, then, that this doctrine is so disagreeable to those whose selfishness and pride have never been subdued, and has been so much opposed in this sinful world.

4. An entire, unconditional resignation to the will of God, and pleasing acquiescence in it, is an essential part of true piety. In order to this, the will of God must be considered as unchangeably wise and good, and as wisely ordering and guiding all events to answer a good end, and ordering all evil as the necessary occasion and means of the greatest good. God cannot be omnipotent, infinitely wise and good, unless he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; and, therefore, on any other supposition there would be no foundation or reason for an implicit, unreserved resignation to his will. The pious, benevolent mind cannot acquiesce in any thing or event which is not wise and good; it cannot be reconciled to evil, considered in itself only as evil; but, in order to be pleased with its taking place, it must be considered in its connection with the good of which it is the occasion. Therefore, true resignation to the will of God does suppose him to guide all the movements in the universe, and order all events in infinite wisdom

and goodness. In this view, and certain of this, the language of the pious, benevolent heart is, "Thy will be done," without making any exception or condition. Whatever evil takes place respecting himself or others, he is ready to espouse the language of pious Eli: "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth good unto him." He with pleasure exerciseth an unreserved submission and resignation to the all-wise and infinitely good Being.

5. Repentance towards God, and humbling ourselves in his sight for our sins, is included in the exercise of Christian piety. This consists in a sense and acknowledgment of the evil of sin, of its ill desert, feeling ourselves wholly blamable and answerable for it, abhorring it, and condemning ourselves for it, renouncing it, and turning from it; in which the sinner justifies God, and approves of his law, and condemns and takes shame to himself. This always takes place and is exercised in the view of those truths which are at least implied in the doctrine which we are considering; and it is impossible the heart should repent while it opposes this doctrine and those truths which are contained in it. This can be done only by an impenitent, selfish, proud heart, which does always oppose and hate this doctrine, though the understanding and judgment may be convinced that it is true.

The doctrine of the decrees of God, foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass for his own glory and the greatest general good, necessarily includes his hatred of sin and the evil and criminal nature of it, as it opposes the glory of God and the general good; and the sinner, who is guilty of it, does herein express his enmity against God and the good which is the object of his decrees; and were the natural tendency and consequence of sin to take place, without being counteracted and overruled to answer an end which sin and the sinner oppose, God's end in his decrees would be frustrated, he would be dishonored, and good be destroyed by unlimited evil.

The sinner is as blamable and criminal as if his sin was not overruled for good, for the nature of it is just as bad and unreasonable as if no good came of it, and sin is as great a crime as it would be were there no divine decrees, and in some respects greater, for the sinner acts as freely as he could were there no decrees; he has all the freedom that is, in the nature of things, possible; he acts voluntarily, and he opposes the wise, holy, and benevolent decrees of God, and that infinitely wise, beautiful, and benevolent plan which he has laid and is executing, even in that very sin and rebellion by which he is accomplishing it. When the sinner's eyes are opened to see all this, he sees the evil of sin, as it is opposed to this infinitely

great and glorious God, to all his wise and benevolent purposes and decrees, and to that wise, glorious, and all-comprehending plan of his operations. He sees this, and adores, and his heart breaks and melts in contrition and self-condemnation, humbling himself in the sight of this God. But the impenitent sinner is irreconcilable, and at enmity with such a God, and, in the pride and impiety of his heart, "replies against God," and says, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"

6. Religious joy in God and his government and kingdom is a branch of true piety. This is inculcated abundantly in the Holy Scripture, and Christians are commanded to "rejoice always in the Lord." And we have many examples of the religious joy of pious persons. The fruit of the Spirit is joy. Believers rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and this joy no man can take from them. This is the joy of the benevolent heart, in the exercise of that love to God which has been described above, beholding him infinitely great and most blessed forever, having an uncontrollable dominion over all, decreeing and fixing from eternity every thing, and all events, in the wisest and best manner, to promote and effect the most desirable and important end, and the greatest possible good of the whole. With this the benevolent mind is supported and pleased, in all the darkness, sin, and evil which take place in this world, and in the view of what will exist forever in the world to come, knowing that God has ordered it all for the sake of the good which he will bring out of it; that the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath, which would not answer this or any good end, he will effectually restrain and prevent. In this view he has solid, lasting support, comfort, and joy, and says, "The Lord reigneth let the earth rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous."

And as this truth, taken in the full latitude of it, is suited to support, comfort, and rejoice the heart of the pious friends of God, in whatever situation they may be, and whatever may be the appearance of things around them, so it is the only truth which can support them. If they give up or let go their hold of this strong foundation and prop, they must sink into gloom, sorrow, and despair. If they have no certainty that God cannot be disappointed in his counsel and designs, and that he has fixed the best plan, including all events, which cannot be altered for the better, — if they know not but things may take place which are not, on the whole, best, but God might have been more glorified, and his people more happy, had they not come to pass, — and did they believe this to be the case, they must sink into darkness, grief, and sorrow, which

no consideration could remove, but must abide on their minds forever.

And when they behold the sin and universal apostasy of mankind, and the infinitely dreadful evils that are the attendants and consequence of this, and know that this was not accidental, or aside from the divine plan, but has been ordered and determined by God, that the way might be opened for redemption by the Son of God,—the most glorious work of God, by which he is glorified, the Redeemer exalted and honored, forever, and the redeemed made most happy in the eternal kingdom of God, in which they hope also to share, and behold and love, and serve and praise, this God without end, —their benevolent joy rises still higher. And the more they contemplate this divine contrivance and plan, with all its appendages, and discern the manifold wisdom and boundless goodness of it, the more does their joy increase, and they are ready to exclaim, with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen."

The selfish man may have a great degree of religious joy, but it is entirely of a different nature and kind from the joy of the truly pious and benevolent; and there is no true piety in it, because there is no true respect to God in it, no disinterested regard to his glory, and the public, general good, or the good of others. It is the joy of the hypocrite, of the false-hearted man, who regards and seeks himself only, his own supposed private, personal good. If he thinks God loves him and intends to make him happy forever, this gives him great joy, while his mind is contracted down to his little self, and he has no disinterested pleasure and joy in beholding God, in his glorious character and unlimited dominion, and infinite, independent felicity, doing whatsoever he pleases, ordering all events for his own glory and the general good; nor is he willing to be so dependent on God, and so wholly indebted to him for all good, as is implied in his foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass. "A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this." (Ps. xcii. 4–6.) But the language of the pious friend of God is, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Ps. xxxiii. 11.)

"My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." (Ps. xxxiv. 2, 3.)

7. Devotion, which consists in the worship of God, in adoration, confession, profession, self-dedication, petition, thanksgiving and praise, is a great and important branch of piety. I shall consider each of these parts of devotion now mentioned, and show that the doctrine which has been deduced from our text, and explained, is so far from being inconsistent with these, that it is suited to excite and promote them, and the only proper foundation of them.

Adoration consists in recollecting and attending to, and with profound awe and religious fear revering, the infinitely excellent and glorious perfections and character of the most high God, manifested in his wonderful works, and most wise and universal government, in a solemn address to him.

Now, no arguments are needed to prove that a Being of infinite greatness, power, rectitude, wisdom, and goodness, who is above all control, doing what he pleases, and ordering and directing every thing by his counsel and decree, with irresistible energy, to answer the best end, — that such a Being is the only proper object of this adoration, and that the more clear conviction and greater impression and sense any one has of such a Being and character, the stronger and more fervent will the exercises of his heart be in humble adoration; and this is the only object that is suited to continue and increase it forever. And the thought that God might be changeable in his designs, and had not decreed whatsoever comes to pass, but that many things do take place contrary to his will, and so as to render his plan of operation less perfect than otherwise it would have been, must tend greatly to damp, if not wholly destroy, the most devout and rational adoration, and is inconsistent with the complete enjoyment and happiness of the devout mind.

Confession of sin, unworthiness, wretchedness, absolute dependence on God and his sovereign grace, etc., is essential to the devotion of a sinner; a conviction and feeling sense of all this is implied in all his pious exercises, and intermixed with them.

All this is implied in repentance, which has been considered; and it has been shown that the truth under consideration is suited to promote this. The more clear view the sinner has of the excellency of the divine character, of the absolute, independent supremacy of God, of his infinite wisdom, rectitude, and goodness, and his entire dependence on the power and operation of God, the greater sense he must have of his

obligation to love and obey him, and consequently of his own guilt, vileness, and ill desert as a sinner and rebel against this God, and feel himself utterly lost and undone; and, therefore, the more freely and fully will he confess all this. Profession, self-dedication to God, thanksgiving and praise, in which the devout worshipper of God expresses before him his love to him, and all the friendly, pious feelings of his heart; devotes himself to God, willing to serve him, to be, do, and suffer whatever God pleases and requires, and to be used by him to answer his wise purposes; acknowledging the goodness of God, admiring and praising him for what he is, and for what he does, — all this is grounded on the infinite perfection and glory of the Deity, who is "over all, God blessed forever," supreme, independent, "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working;" whose energy guides every motion and event in the universe, according to the counsel of his own will. A being who is not supreme, not so powerful, wise, and good as necessarily to foreordain whatsoever comes to pass, could not be the proper object of these devout exercises of the pious heart.

SERMON III.

I know that, whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doth it, that men should fear before him. — Ec. iii. 14.

In the preceding discourse, the exercise of piety has been considered in a number of particulars. The last mentioned was devotion, and several things included in this have been considered. Another branch of devotion now requires our attention.

Petition is that part of devotion in which we, in our address to God, express our desires, or ask him to do or grant that which to us appears good and desirable. This requires a more particular consideration, as some have thought it not consistent with the doctrine of God's decrees, foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass; because, according to this, every thing is fixed, and cannot be altered. It has been said there cannot be any reason or motive to pray, or make any petition, to an unchangeable God, whose design cannot be altered, and who has fixed all events, without a possibility of any change.

Before any attempt is made to remove this objection and supposed difficulty, it must be observed, that it equally lies against the foreknowledge of God. For if God certainly foreknows every thing that will take place, then every event is fixed and certain, otherwise it could not be foreknown. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." He has determined, and passed an unchangeable decree, with respect to all he will do to eternity. Upon the plan of the objection under consideration, it may be asked, What reason or motive can any one have to ask God to do any thing for him, or any one else, since he infallibly knows from the beginning what he will do, and, therefore, it is unalterably fixed? Therefore, if it be reasonable to pray to an omniscient God, it is equally reasonable to pray to an unchangeable God; for the former necessarily implies the latter. But, in order to show that the objection is without foundation, the following things must be observed: —

1. If God were not omniscient and unchangeable, and had not foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, he would not be the proper object of worship, and there would be no foundation, reason, or encouragement to make any petition to him.

This, it is presumed, will be evident to any one who will well consider the following observations: —

First. If there were no unchangeable, omniscient Being, there would be no God, no proper object of worship. A being who is capable of change is necessarily imperfect, and may change from bad to worse, and even cease to exist, and, therefore, could not be trusted. If we could know that such a being has existed, and that he was once wise and good and powerful, we could have no evidence that he would continue to be wise or good, or that he is so now, or that he is now disposed to pay any regard to our petitions, or is either willing or able to grant them, or even that he has any existence. What reason of encouragement, then, can there be to pray to a changeable being? Surely none at all. Therefore, if there be no reason to pray to an unchangeable God, there can be no reason to pray at all.

Second. If God be infinitely wise and good, and omnipotent, supreme, and independent, then he certainly is unchangeable, and has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. This has been proved above, or, rather, is self-evident. But if he be not infinitely wise and good, etc., then he cannot be trusted; he cannot be the object of that trust and confidence which is implied, and even expressed, in praying to him.

Third. The truly pious, benevolent, devout man would not desire, or even dare, to pray to God for any thing, if he were changeable and disposed to alter his purpose and plan, in order to grant his petitions. Therefore, he never does pray to any but an unchangeable God, whose counsel stands forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. He is sensible that he is a very imperfect creature; that his heart, his will, is awfully depraved and sinful; that he knows not what is wisest and best to be done in any one instance; what is best for him, for mankind in general, for the world, or for the universe; what is most for the glory of God and the greatest general good; and that it would be infinitely undesirable and dreadful to have his own will regarded so as to govern in determining what shall be done for him or any other being, or what shall take place. If it could be left to him to determine in the least instance, he would not dare to do it, but would refer it back to God, and say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." But he could not do this unless he were certain that the will of God was unchangeably wise and good, and that he had decreed to do what was most for his own glory, and the greatest good of the whole, at the same time infallibly knowing what must take place, in every instance, in order to answer this end, and, consequently, must have fixed upon the most wise and best plan, foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass. Therefore, whatever be his petitions for himself or for others,

he offers them to God, and asks, on this condition, always either expressed or implied, "If it be agreeable to thy will;" for otherwise he would not have his petitions granted, if it were possible. And he who asks any thing of God without making this condition, but sets up his own will, and desires to have it gratified, whether it be for the glory of God and the greatest good of his kingdom, or not, and would, were it in his power, compel his Maker to grant his petition, and bow the will of God to his own will, — he who prays to God with such a disposition is an impious enemy to God, exercises no true devotion, and cannot be heard; and it is desirable to all the friends of God that he should be rejected. Resignation to the will of God always supposes his will is unchangeably fixed and established; which it could not be, unless he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Thus it appears that if God were changeable, and had not foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, there would be no foundation for religious worship, or reason for praying to him; or that there can be no reason or encouragement for prayer and petition to any but an unchangeable God. I proceed to observe, —

2. There is good reason, and all desirable and possible encouragement, to pray to an unchangeable God, who has, from eternity, determined what he will do in every instance, and has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. This will doubtless be evident to him who will duly consider the following particulars: —

First. Prayer is as proper, important, and necessary, in order to obtain favor from an unchangeable God, as it could be were he changeable and had not ordained forever any thing. Means are as necessary in order to obtain the end as if nothing were fixed and certain. Though it was decreed that Paul and all the men in the ship should get safe to land when they were in a storm at sea, yet this must be accomplished by means, and, unless the sailors had assisted in managing the ship, this event could not take place, and they could not be saved. Prayer is a means of obtaining what God has determined to grant; for he has determined to give it in answer to prayer, and no other way. "Ask, and ye shall receive," says our Savior. When God had promised to do many and great things for Israel, he adds, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.) The granting of favors which God had determined to bestow were as much suspended, on their asking for them, as if there had been nothing determined and fixed about it. There is as much regard had to prayer in

granting favors, and the prayer is heard, and God gives them, as really and as much in answer to it as if there were nothing determined and foreordained respecting them; for the decree includes and fixes the means as much as the end — the method and way by which events are to take place, as much as those events themselves. The one depends on the other as much as if there were no decree and nothing fixed; yea, much more, for the decree fixes the dependence and connection between the means and the end; whereas, if there were no decree, and nothing fixed, there would be no established connection, but all would be uncertain, and there would be no reason or encouragement to use means, or do any thing to obtain an end.

Surely, then, there is as much reason and encouragement to pray to an unchangeable God, and this is as important and necessary, as if there were nothing fixed by the divine decrees, and much more; yea, the unchangeable purposes of God are the necessary, and only proper ground and reason of prayer.

Second. Though prayer is not designed to make any change in God, or alter his purpose, — which is impossible, — yet it is suited and designed to have an effect on the petitioner, and prepare him to receive that for which he prays. And this is a good reason why he should pray. It tends to make the petitioner feel more and more sensibly his wants, and those of others for whom he prays, and the miserable state in which he and they are; for in prayer these are called up to view, and dwelt upon; and prayer tends to give a sense of the worth and importance of the favors asked. It is also suited to make persons feel, more and more, their own helplessness and entire dependence on God for the favors for which they petition, of which their praying is an acknowledgment; and, therefore, tends to enhance them in the eyes of the petitioner when given in answer to prayer, and to make him more sensible of the free sovereign goodness of God in granting them.* In sum, this is suited to keep the existence and character of God

* A kind and wise father, who designs to give his child some particular favor, will bring the child to ask for it before he bestows it, and will suspend the gift upon this condition, for the benefit of the child, that what he grants may be a real advantage to him, and a greater than if it were given before the child was better prepared to receive it, by earnestly and humbly asking for it; and that the father may hereby receive a proper acknowledgment from the child, and be treated in a becoming manner. And, in this case, the petition of the child is as really regarded, heard, and granted, and the child's application and prayer to the father is as much a means of obtaining the favor, and as proper, important, and necessary, as if the father had not previously determined the whole affair. And when the children of such a father know that this is his way of bestowing favors on them, they will have as proper motives and as much encouragement to ask for all they want as if he had not determined what he would do antecedent to their asking him; yea, much more.

in view, and impress a sense of religious truths in general on the mind, and to form the mind to universal obedience and a conscientious watchfulness and circumspection in all religious exercises.

Third. It is reasonable, and highly proper and important, and for the honor of God, that the friends of God should express and acknowledge their entire dependence on him, and trust in him for all they want for themselves and others, and their belief in the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; and all this is acknowledged, expressly or implicitly, in prayer to God. It is also reasonable and proper that they should express their desire of those things which are needed by themselves or others, and which God alone can give or accomplish; and such desires are expressed in the best way and manner by petitioning for them. And in asking for blessings on others, and praying for their enemies, they express their disinterested benevolence, which is an advantage to themselves, and pleasing to God, even though their petitions should have no influence in procuring the favors which they ask; and in praying that God would honor himself, and advance his own kingdom, and accomplish all the great and glorious things which he has promised to do for his own honor and the good of his people, they do not express any doubts of his fulfilling his promises, but are certain he will grant their petitions; but they hereby express their acquiescence in these things, and their earnest desire that they may be accomplished; and also profess and express their love to God, and friendship to his people and kingdom, and do that which the feelings of a pious, benevolent heart will naturally, and even necessarily, prompt them to do.

We have many examples of such petitions and prayers for those things and events which the petitioners, antecedent to their prayers, knew would certainly be accomplished. We have a decisive and remarkable instance of this in David, the King of Israel, in the following words: "And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it forever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer before thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant. Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant,

that it may continue forever before thee; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever." (2 Sam. vii. 25–29.) Here David not only prays God to do that which at the same time he knew and acknowledges God had promised to do, — and, therefore, it was established as firm as the throne of the Almighty, and decreed that it should take place, — but he says that this promise of God, making it certain, was the reason, motive, and encouragement to him to make this prayer: "Thou, O Lord, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer before thee." We hence are warranted to assert that it is reasonable and proper to pray for that which God has promised, and that the certainty that it will be accomplished is a motive and encouragement to pray for it. How greatly, then, do they err who think that, if every event is made certain by God's decree, there is no reason or encouragement to pray for any thing!

Our Savior, in the pattern of prayer which he has dictated, directs men to pray that God would bring to pass those events which were already fixed and decreed, and, therefore, must infallibly take place. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done," etc.

Christ himself, in the seventeenth chapter of John, prays for those whom the Father had given to him, that he would keep them through his own name, and that they might be one, as the Father and Son were one; might be kept from the evil in the world, and be sanctified through the truth; that they might be with him in heaven forever, and behold his glory. At the same time he knew that all this was made certain to them; for he had before said, that all that were given to him should come to him, and he would raise them up at the last day; that he would give unto them eternal life, and not one of them should perish, as none should be able to pluck them out of his hands, or his Father's. He prays, "Father, glorify thy name;" not because this event was uncertain, but to express his earnest desire of that which he knew was decreed, and could not but take place, and his willingness to give up every thing, even his own life, to promote this. Again, Christ prays in the following words: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." The event for which Christ prays in these words was decreed from eternity, and the decree had been long before published, in the second and one hundred and tenth

Psalms. "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And he had declared the certainty of that for which he here prays, since his incarnation. He had said, that all power in heaven and earth was given unto him; that "the Father had committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." St. Paul, when speaking of God, often introduces the following words: "To whom be glory forever, Amen;" which is not to be considered as a mere doxology, by which glory is ascribed to God, but it is rather a wish or desire that God may be glorified forever; and the Amen corroborates it: as if he had said, "Let it be so; this is the most ardent desire of my soul, including the sum of all my petitions." Here, then, the apostle utters a desire and petition for that which he knew was decreed and would take place.

The last words of Christ to his church are, "Surely I come quickly." Upon which promise the following petition of the church, and of every friend of his, is presented to him: "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." Here is a petition, in which all Christians join, praying Christ to do what he has promised, and which, therefore, was as certain as a declared decree could possibly make it; and the petition is grounded on this promise and decree published by Christ, in which the petitioners express their hearty approbation of the coming of Christ, and earnest desire of this important and happy event; and if it be reasonable thus to pray for an event which is fixed and made certain by an unchangeable decree, and cannot be altered, as in the instance before us, then it is reasonable and proper to pray for any thing or any event which appears to us desirable and important, though we know God is unchangeable, and that all things and every event are fixed by an unalterable decree.

The apostle John says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John v. 14, 15.) To ask for any thing according to his will, is to ask for those things which it is agreeable to his will to grant; and this is to be known only by what he has revealed. When we ask him to do what he has declared he will do, then we know we ask for that which is according to his will, and, consequently, that we have our

petitions. But it will be asked, What are these things? I answer, that God will glorify himself in all things, and make the brightest display of his perfections and character forever; that he will promote and effect the greatest possible good of the universe; that he will make his church and kingdom perfectly happy and glorious forever; that he will accomplish all his designs and predictions, and fulfil all his promises, to his church and people, and cause all things to work for the good of those who love him, and give his Holy Spirit to all who ask him. These, I think, must be the things we ask, when we know that we pray for any thing according to the will of God, and consequently know that he heareth us, and that we have the petitions that we desired of him. But in all these instances we ask for that which God has said he will do, that is, has decreed that he will do them. And, as it has been said before, if a decree in these instances does not render it unreasonable or improper to pray for their accomplishment, then, if God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass, this is not in the least inconsistent with our praying for whatever appears to us desirable and good, and may not be contrary to the will of God to grant. But here it must be observed, that when we ask for any particular things or events which, though it may not be contrary to the will of God to grant, yet he has in no way revealed that it is his will to grant our petitions, — when we ask for any such thing, we must do it with an express or implicit reserve — *if it be according to the will of God.* Otherwise, or if it be not according to his will, we must withdraw our petition, and not desire to have it granted. Resignation to the will of God, whatever it may be, in all such instances, is essential to the pious petitions of a benevolent friend of God. And by thus referring to the will of God, and resigning to that, desiring it may be done in all cases, whatever petitions we may make, we do refer to the decrees of God, by which he has determined what he will do in every particular instance; for his will and his decrees are in this case one and the same, being fixed and unchangeable.

Fourth. It is not only proper and important that the worshippers of God should express their desires of those things which they want, in praying for them, but were this not true, and were not asking for them the means and way of obtaining them, yet the pious friends of God would esteem it a privilege and enjoyment to be allowed and invited, "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make known their requests unto him." To them prayer is not a task from which they would be glad to be excused, but they practise it with pleasure. They have great support, enjoyment, and happiness

in casting their cares upon God, and expressing the desires of their hearts to him. While others restrain prayer before God, and say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" the benevolent friend of God would pray, were it only for the enjoyment which he has in the exercise, and says in his heart, "I will call upon God as long as I live." And though he is certain that God is unchangeable, and that nothing is done or will come to pass which is not foreordained by him, this does not tend to prevent, or in the least abate, the pleasure and enjoyment he has in making known his requests to God, or his desire constantly to practise it; but this truth gives him support and consolation, and increases his delight in calling upon God, and renders it more desirable and pleasant unto him; yea, were not this a truth, he could not find any reason for making his requests known to him, or any delight in doing it, and would not have any encouragement, or even dare, to ask for any thing, as has been observed and shown.

And now this matter is to be left to the judgment of every one who will attend to it. It is hoped that it appears evident beyond all dispute, from the light in which this subject has been now set, that the doctrine of God's decreeing whatsoever comes to pass is not only consistent with all the exercises of true piety, but is the proper foundation for this, and is suited to excite and promote these exercises; and that there can be no real piety which is not consistent with this truth.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE SUBJECT.

I. It appears, from what has been said on this subject, that they who are in their hearts opposed to this doctrine of the decrees of God are strangers to true piety, and do not fear before God. Though they may have exercises which they call and think to be piety and real religion, and it may have an *appearance* of it to others, yet it has nothing of the real nature of true piety, but is enmity and opposition to the true God. They may think they love God, and are speaking for him, and to his honor, and in favor of religion, while they are strenuously opposing this doctrine, as dishonorable to God, and destructive to all virtue and true religion; but they are deceived, and are really opposing and dishonoring the true God, and denying and renouncing that truth which is the only foundation of true piety.

This will, without doubt, be thought very uncharitable by many, as it condemns a great part of professing Christians,

as destitute of true piety, and not real Christians. But is it the office of charity to give up the truth because it condemns ourselves or our fellow-men? Is it uncharitable to think and speak according to the truth, and to censure those who are censured by the God of truth? True charity, or love, "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth *in the truth*." If the subject we have been considering has been justly represented, and the truth established by undeniable evidence, then this inference that has now been made follows with the greatest certainty, and must be admitted, however many are censured and condemned by it, and be they who they may.

It is to be carefully observed, that the inference is, "whosoever in their hearts, and in the exercise of what they call piety, oppose this doctrine of God's foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass, have no real religion." Persons may, through the prejudices of education, or some other way, be led to misunderstand this doctrine, and have very wrong conceptions of it, and imbibe prejudices against it, in their speculations, and yet the exercise of their hearts be in some measure agreeable to it, in the practice of real piety. Their piety may not prevent or remove all their wrong and mistaken speculations and conceptions on this point. But if their *hearts* oppose this truth, — which is the foundation of all true piety, — their hearts are not right with God, but they must be enemies to him, and in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity, whatever specious pretences they may make of love to God and of devotion.

On the other hand, persons may be right in their speculations on this point, and be fully convinced of the truth of this doctrine, — yea, be very zealous in arguing for it, and vindicating it against opposers, — and yet never heartily submit to it, but really oppose it in their hearts, and be wholly strangers to every exercise of true piety.

On the whole, he who cordially submits to this doctrine, and has exercises of heart answerable to it, is a pious man, and fears before God, whatever his speculations may be. And he whose heart opposes this doctrine in the whole tenor of his exercises is a stranger to true piety, though he may be orthodox in his speculative opinion. It is desirable, however, that every man's judgment and speculations should be according to the truth; and it cannot be easily accounted for that a person whose heart is truly pious and benevolent should continue to disbelieve and reject this doctrine, when under all proper and desirable advantages to get light and instruction; to have all his false conceptions of it removed; to know what it is; what is, and what is not, implied in it; and to learn the foundation and reason of it, and how expressly and abundantly,

and in a variety of ways, it is taught and inculcated in the Holy Scriptures.

And if a person under all these advantages and instructions perseveres in renouncing and opposing this doctrine, as very disagreeable, and overthrowing all religion, with an obstinacy and zeal which appear to proceed from the disposition and feelings of the heart, we have reason to fear, yea, to determine, that the heart is not right with God, and that such opposition flows from this root of bitterness.

That the unrenewed, selfish, impenitent man should dislike and oppose this doctrine, can be easily accounted for. For it appears, from what has been said on this subject, that it must be, of all things, most disagreeable to him, and that to which one of such a disposition and character can never submit. But that he who is born of God, and has a humble, benevolent heart, and loves and fears God, and delights in the Bible, meditating therein day and night, is pleased to have God exalted as a glorious, omnipotent, unchangeable, infinitely wise and good sovereign of the universe, and to have proud man humbled and abased before him, — that such a one should not believe that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, but oppose and be displeased with such a doctrine, is quite unaccountable.

II. This subject teaches us the reason and importance of making the glory of God our supreme end in all we do.

1. Because this is the highest, best, and most important end that can be proposed and pursued, and, therefore, most agreeable to wisdom and benevolence.

2. Because God himself makes this his end in all his works. This is asserted in the truth which is established in the foregoing discourse, viz., that God hath, for his own glory, foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; and it has been shown that this must be the supreme end of the infinitely wise and benevolent Being in all he does, and that this is necessarily included in the assertion in our text, "that whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever." It is certainly reasonable that we should pursue the same end that God does in his works, and herein imitate him as his children. If it be wise and benevolent in God to lay a plan and pursue it to glorify himself, to make the brightest display of his own perfections, wisdom and benevolence will lead us to do all for the same end.

3. Because the glory of God, the greatest manifestation and display of the divine character and perfections, includes the greatest possible good of the created universe; for in producing and effecting this, the omnipotence, infinite wisdom and goodness of God are acted out and manifested to the greatest

advantage to be seen by creatures. The glory of God and the greatest happiness of the creation, therefore, cannot be separated, as two distinct and different ends, since the one necessarily implies and involves the other. The highest happiness of a creature consists in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, in beholding, loving, and glorifying him; and, therefore, the more his perfections are manifested to the creation, the more happy will creatures be; and the greater the happiness and glory of the creation is, the more is God glorified, the greater is the display of his power, wisdom, and goodness. Does is not hence follow, that the glory of God implies all possible good, and, therefore, is to be sought as the supreme end? How reasonable and important then is it, that we should with zeal and fervor of mind constantly aim at this end, in obedience to the apostolic injunction, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"!

4. Because he who makes the glory of God his supreme end, and consequently seeks the greatest good and happiness of the creation, in the kingdom of God, is necessarily happy himself. His benevolence, by which he makes this grand object his supreme end, and places his happiness in the glory of God and the greatest general good, will necessarily render him happy in seeing this end completely accomplished, as it will be to the utmost of his wishes, and far beyond his present conceptions. He must necessarily share in all this good, when it takes place, because, by the supposition, this is his chosen good; and while he seeks this as the grand object of his desire and happiness, and is at the same time assured that it shall be accomplished, he has a great degree of enjoyment. He, in a measure, enjoys the good he seeks, in the assured prospect that it will take place. Thus universal, disinterested benevolence, which seeks the glory of God and the general good, is the only affection which can interest us in that good which will take place to the highest degree, and give us our full share in it; whereas, the contrary affection, self-love, necessarily excludes from all true happiness, because the selfish person places not his happiness in the glory of God and the public good, the happiness and glory of his kingdom, but in his own exaltation, and private, personal good. He is, of course, an enemy to the only true good and happiness, and, so far as that takes place, he is necessarily excluded and unhappy.

He, therefore, who, in this sense, denies himself, gives up all that separate, personal, private interest which self-love seeks, and, in this sense, loses his own life, shall find or save his life; that is, shall be truly and eternally happy in the exercise

of disinterested affection to God and the members of his kingdom, which necessarily puts him in possession of the public good and happiness, and gives him his share in this social felicity, as one of the members of the society. But he who saves his life — that is, who, having no public, disinterested affection, seeks himself only, and is pursuing and seeking to save to himself a separate, private interest, for the sake of which he is ready to sacrifice and oppose the glory of God and the general good — shall lose his life; that is, shall lose or miss of all happiness, and must necessarily be miserable.

Thus we see in what respects, and for what reasons, it is our indispensable duty, and of the highest importance to us, to make the glory of God our supreme end in all we do; and, by what has been observed, we may learn what is implied in this. It is to set this above every thing else; to aim at and pursue nothing but this, and what is implied in it; to subordinate every thing with which we are concerned to the glory of God; to give up and devote ourselves, with all we have and are, to answer this end, without making any reserve, freely renouncing all supposable or possible interest or good for ourselves or others which is inconsistent with the glory of God, or which will not conduce to it and promote it.

III. They who desire to know their own character and the nature of their religious exercises, whether they bear the stamp of true piety, may examine and try themselves, by what has been exhibited on this subject, whether the God which is revealed in the Bible, unchangeable in his being, perfections, designs, decrees, and works, is the chosen and delightful object of their religious affections; of their love, fear, hope, and trust; of their gratitude and joy; of their adoration and praise, to whom they make confession, and pray with perseverance and pleasure; and whether they are conscious that a God, who has not foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, could not be the object of these their pious affections.

As to those who dislike and oppose this doctrine, and say they cannot love and worship such a God, and yet think themselves truly pious and in the way to heaven, and that they are serving and honoring God in their opposition to this doctrine, we will leave them to the day which shall try every man's work, of what sort it is; at the same time being certain, that if their hearts and all the exercises of them do oppose and reject the God who has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and they live and die with such hearts, they will be found to be workers of iniquity, and ranked with them who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

IV. Let all who believe this doctrine be concerned to live

answerable to it, and constantly fear before this God, and live in the exercise and practice of every branch of true godliness; and not, as many do, hold the truth in unrighteousness, and pervert it to bad purposes.

The Christian has learnt to unite a conviction and sense of entire dependence on God, who orders and works all things according to his unchangeable decree, for every motion and right exercise of heart, with zeal and activity in religion, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, with self-diffidence, and a sense of his own insufficiency for any good thing, and a humble dependence on God for grace to do his duty, because he knows that God worketh in him both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, (Phil. ii. 12, 13;) and the stronger and more steady conviction he has that God overrules and orders all things for his own glory and the greatest good of the whole, even all the sin and rebellion of men, the more unreasonable and criminal does sin appear to him, as it is, in its nature and tendency, direct opposition to this event; and, therefore, the more does he loathe, abhor, and condemn himself for his sins, and acknowledge his desert of eternal destruction, knowing that God's foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass leaves the sinner as free a moral agent, and as inexcusable and criminal, as if there were no decree in the case.

Blessed are they who understand these things, and know the only true God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, who exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

MISCELLANIES.

The following articles were not received in season to be inserted in their appropriate places, and are therefore placed here.

ON THE SLAVE TRADE.*

Mr. Editor: It is thought the following hints are, at this time, worthy of the particular attention of the citizens of this state, and especially of our honorable legislators. You are, therefore, desired to insert them in your Mercury, devoted to the good of the public.

It is well known that, at the last session of the general assembly of this state, it was considered and debated, whether a law should be made to prohibit the slave trade to the inhabitants of this state, and that the motion was negatived by a considerable majority. It is presumed, not because the slave trade is thought justifiable, or, on the whole, advantageous to the state, but for the following reasons, which were urged: —

I. It was said, that as the slaves were taken from the coast of Africa, not in the jurisdiction of this state, and might be carried to places equally out of the limits of our legislature, there could be no right or authority in this state to make such a law; and, therefore, to attempt to do it would be equally unreasonable and ridiculous.

This argument seems to be wholly founded on the supposition that the slave trade is, in itself, no moral evil, but lawful; for, it is presumed, none will dispute the right, propriety, and importance of prohibiting the inhabitants of this state committing violent depredation and murder on their fellowmen, in any part of the world. All will allow that the legis-

* From the Newport Mercury of May 1, 1784.

lators of any state have right to make laws to restrain their subjects from the practice of piracy, in any place whatever, and to punish men, when convicted of this crime, though committed in places, in other respects, out of their jurisdiction. But it is to be hoped there are but few, very few, citizens in this state who *now* think the slave trade is, in itself, innocent and lawful. Are not all who have acquainted themselves with the nature, circumstances, and manner of this trade, and are willing to consider it impartially, fully convinced that it is one of the most flagrant instances of open violation of all the rights of mankind — of inhumanity, cruelty, and murder — that have ever been perpetrated by any civilized nation? It would fill volumes fully to display the unrighteousness, the horrible cruelty, and bloodshed which have been the attendants and consequences of this inhuman traffic, by which millions of our fellow-men have been, contrary to all right, and in the most cruel manner, forced from their native country and all dear connections, and sold into most ignominious, abject slavery, there to wear out a wretched life, and leave their children in the same miserable state. And many thousands of them have been murdered by the barbarous treatment of them on board the ships, or after they have been sold. This, therefore, will not be attempted here; but the reader is referred to what has been written on the subject in a number of late publications.

It is well known that the inhabitants of this state have had a greater hand in the slave trade than any other on this continent, and, therefore, must have incurred the greatest share of the guilt. And what can we do less than say, "*We will do so no more*"? Is not this the only hopeful way to escape the vengeance that now hangs over our heads? This trade has been carried on many years by the connivance, at least, if not the encouragement, of the legislature. How proper, how important is it, then, that they should now arise and bear testimony against it, and do all in their power to abolish it forever — that they should be the *first* in setting the good example, and show their approbation of the wise and noble resolution of congress in the beginning of our struggle for liberty! To sit still *now*, and be silent, is to neglect the best opportunity to wash our hands, as far as possible, from the blood that otherwise must be found in them, and prevent impending wrath bursting on our heads.

Let us, then, with one voice, say to our fathers who shall convene in the next general assembly, "Arise, for this work belongeth unto you. We will be with you. Deal courageously, and do it, and the Lord shall be with the good."

II. It was urged, that it is improper for this state to take up the matter, and prohibit the slave trade, since it has been laid before congress by a petition from the general meeting of Friends in Philadelphia, desiring that, in their wisdom, they would enter upon some measures to put a stop to it; and that honorable body have it now under their consideration.

This appears so far from an *objection*, that it is rather a strong argument for making such a law without delay. For this is so far from dictating to congress, or taking it out of their hands, that it would be the most express and proper approbation of their resolve just mentioned, and will tend to strengthen their hands in so good a work, if they be disposed to do all they can to prevent the revival of that pernicious trade, of which we must not entertain the least doubt.

The legislature are to be honored and applauded for the measure they have taken gradually to abolish slavery in this state. There have been strong objections, however, against the law lately made for that end, particularly that clause of it which obliges the towns, where the blacks who are to be free shall be born, to be at the charge of their education till they be of age, or can maintain themselves. It is said, this lays an unreasonable burden on the few towns where most of the slaves are, while the greater part of the state will be at little or no charge; whereas it ought to be laid equally on the whole state, as it is by the connivance or neglect of the state that the slavery of the Africans has been introduced and continued among us.

If this objection be well founded, the honorable general assembly may, and doubtless will, make such amendment in that particular as wholly to remove the complaint. But let it be remembered, that since this evil practice has been so long continued, and got such deep root among us, it cannot be expected it may be eradicated and abolished without great difficulty, and so that no one shall suffer by it more than another. And as it is so important and necessary — in order to do justice to the injured Africans, and promote the public good, and our acting a consistent part, who have been such mighty advocates for *our own liberty* — that liberty should be restored to them, ought we to think much of a little expense, or of doing more than we think is our equal part, in order to answer such important ends? Besides, it will be said, with some appearance of justice, at least, that the towns where there are the most slaves ought to be at most of the expense necessary for the removal of this evil, as they have the greatest share of guilt, and have had the most advantage by it, if slavery be, indeed, any advantage; but if it be not, let the masters free

all their slaves who are so young as to have children, and save both the state and the town from the expense of educating their children. For, if all such were freed immediately, it is presumed there are not two in a hundred who would not maintain themselves and their children, and educate them as well, at least, as white children in general are educated, might they have an equal chance with the whites to get a living.

This suggests a proposal which has been made, and may not be unworthy of consideration. Why need the towns be at any expense to educate these freed children of slaves? Why ought not this to be laid on the slaveholders themselves? They can educate them with little expense, and be paid by their labor, before they be of age. But, if the children do not repay them, they will be more than paid by the profit of their parents' labor. What right have these masters to make their slaves wear out the prime of life in their service, and turn their children on the public for maintenance? If they do not choose to maintain and educate their children, let them free their slaves, that they may support themselves and their children, and be no charge to the masters or the public.

Moreover, if the law obliged the masters to educate the children of their slaves, another objection made against it, as it now stands, would be obviated, viz., that it is rather an encouragement to masters to hold their servants in slavery, as they are freed from the expense and trouble of educating their children; whereas, if they were obliged to support and educate them, this would be a motive with many to free their servants, and so promote the professed design of the law — the freedom of slaves.

LETTER TO DR. RYLAND,

Of Northampton, England, on the Controversy between Dr. Hopkins and Rev. Abraham Booth.

NEWPORT, November 24, 1797.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: I thank you for your kind communication, (without date,) accompanied with two parcels, containing Mr. Scott's "Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ," together with four pamphlets, of the chief of which you are the author; and Mr. Booth's "Reign of Grace," which came to hand on the 1st instant.

I had before seen all the pamphlets you have sent to me, except your sermons to your congregation at Northampton,

on your leaving them, and have been much gratified and pleased with them. Mr. Hall was an amiable, excellent man. I read your discourse at the ordination of Mr. Fawkner, to my church, which was highly approved by them. I have for a number of years been acquainted with your character and writings; and you have had my affectionate esteem and good will. Messrs. Fuller, Sutclif, and Pearce, of Birmingham, have also much of my esteem and love.

I have been surprised, and not a little grieved, to find that Mr. Booth's "Glad Tidings" has been reviewed and highly approved and recommended in the Evangelical, Missionary, and Gospel Magazines; and in the latter (I think, for I have them not by me now) a passage is selected from him, as very excellent, which appeared to me to be senseless, evasive, and contradictory. I presumed you could not approve of that book, and was confirmed in my opinion by a piece inserted in the Evangelical Magazine, of which I concluded you was the author, which evidently had reference to Mr. Booth's publication, and was calculated to sap the whole foundation of it. As it is not by me now, I cannot refer to the number nor the signature.

You did not think proper to mention Mr. Booth's book; and I perceive he is so popular a writer that it is thought not best expressly to oppose him. When Mr. Scott wrote, he, as Mr. B. observes, *tacitly* directed it against various things in his "Glad Tidings;" not thinking it best, openly and expressly, to mention and oppose him and his book. I think we should not be so cautious in America.

Let the goodness of Mr. Booth's heart and life, and his abilities, be what they may, his theory of Christianity and religious exercises is wholly *selfish;* which is as opposite to true religion as darkness is to light, as sin to holiness. In support of this selfish religion he has written his "Glad Tidings." Is he not therefore to be blamed? And ought he not to be withstood to the face? Besides, it may be asked, Can the utmost Christian candor and charity reconcile with Christian uprightness and benevolence an attempt to expose and condemn an author, as perverting the gospel, by artfully transcribing here and there a sentence of his, while he wholly overlooks the arguments which the author thought sufficient to support his assertions?

It appears he was on the same selfish, inconsistent plan when he wrote his "Reign of Grace." He says nothing in the whole treatise, that I have observed, inconsistent with a wholly selfish religion, and repeatedly asserted that which necessarily implies it. He says, (p. 248,) "It is self-evident that the rigor of the sanctions of the law of God can never be loved by a

person obnoxious to its condemning power, etc. Fallen man, therefore, cannot love God, but as he is revealed in a Mediator," etc. See, to the same purpose, pp. 268, 270. It is remarkable that Mr. B. should repeatedly assert in his "Glad Tidings," that if a sinner were made in the least degree holy, a friend to God and his law, previous to his pardon and justification, he would stand in no need of free pardon and justification by the righteousness of Christ alone, for he has something of his own to recommend him to the favor of God; and *on this ground only*, condemn the author he mentions as perverting the gospel, because he asserted that sinners must approve of the law of God, etc., antecedent to their believing in Christ; and at the same time wholly neglect the reasons which that author gave, that the sinner, though renewed to holiness, could not by this be recommended to the favor of God, but stood in as much need of free pardon wholly on account of the atonement of Christ, as he would do were he not thus renewed. It is remarkable, I say, that he should say and do all this, when he had, in his "Reign of Grace," asserted the contrary, over and over again, viz., that no degree of holiness of the sinner can avail in the least degree for his pardon and justification. See pp. 96, 175, 176, 178, 183, 188, 189, 190, 191, 202, 226, 276, 277, 278, 347, 374, 375. Had he recollected this, and believed, when he wrote his "Glad Tidings," he would not have censured the author he mentions, as he has done, without knowing that he really censured himself, at least, as much.

He grants and asserts, that all men who are not justified by the righteousness of Christ are *guilty*, *unrighteous*, *wicked*, and *accursed*. (pp. 175, 176, 178.) And why may not sinners in this state, and of this character, be properly denominated *ungodly*, though regenerate? If so, the word on which he so much relies is given up, and Mr. Scott and others are to be justified in their interpretation of Rom. iv. 5, 6.

Mr. B. asserts, that previous to pardon and justification, a sinner must become *poor in spirit*, and approve of the gospel, (pp. 8, 66, 94, 100;) must be sensible he deserves damnation, (p. 103;) must believe, trust in Christ, and receive him, and the blessings of the gospel; must look to Christ for salvation, etc. (pp. 132, 137, 143, 144, 157, 214, 215, 252, 329, 336, 339, 353, 354.) And yet he constantly insists upon it that no *terms* or *conditions* are proposed as necessary to take place antecedent to the sinner's justification; and that the sinner, previous to his justification, and until he is justified, is under the power of pride and enmity against God, and is actuated by the temper, and bears the very image, of the devil. (p. 190.) Is it possible to reconcile these glaring inconsistencies?

What Mr. B. says, (p. 106,) I think, if it has any meaning, asserts that sanctification is not that by which Christians obtain evidence of their justification, and is as absurd as any position of ————, or of any Antinomian.

What is said of the thief on the cross, (pp. 135, 136,) though taken alone it be true, yet viewed in connection with his scheme, appears to me to be a loose, unmeaning, self-contradictory harangue.

Mr. Booth's assertions (pp. 171, 172) are inconsistent with an unholy, unregenerate sinner's believing the gospel, and with desiring and receiving the blessings of it; for how can that be the object of faith which is not seen or willingly received, which is not desired or relished? But I am tired of attending to the inconsistencies and absurdities of this author. And perhaps I have said too much. Let them who do not see the errors and inconsistence avail themselves of the advantage of all the good things to be found in his "Reign of Grace."

I have read Mr. Scott, and think him orthodox, so far as he goes, in his notion of the warrant and nature of faith in Christ. But he says some things which seem to be a little inconsistent, or at least want to be more fully explained. Perhaps Mr. B. will take no public notice of him, since he has opposed him so *tacitly*, without mentioning his name, or expressly quoting him. I believe it will be wise in Mr. B. to be silent.

I am not satisfied that Mr. Scott clearly distinguishes between selfish affections and disinterested exercises of religion, and think there is reason to believe he does not, both from his making no remarks on this head upon what Mr. B. advances in his "Glad Tidings," and especially from what he says respecting American divines: "That sometimes they seem to intimate that an almost total disregard to our own happiness is essential to true grace. They do not clearly distinguish that wise and holy self-love, which God originally planted in our nature, from that carnal, apostate, and foolish self-love, which is the consequence of the fall." (pp. 3, 4.) If by holy *self-love* he means any thing distinct from *disinterested benevolence*, and which is not necessarily included in it, as it seems he does, he must mean that which is in the nature of it *sin;* and consequently does not properly distinguish selfish religion from that which consists in disinterested affection, or between true and false religion. It is presumed that his neglect to make proper distinctions on this head has led him to censure some American divines as "making many unscriptural distinctions, and advancing positions which obscure the glory of the gospel." Of this, however, we and the public might have been better able

to judge, had he condescended to tell what were those mischievous positions and distinctions. In the mean time, it is thought that his publicly naming a particular minister as guilty of all this, without informing him or the public what his crime is, by particularly stating the positions and distinctions he has advanced, is rather magisterial, ungenerous, and injurious. But we must allow good English divines to have a spice of what we, on this side of the water, call *British pride.*

He cannot reasonably impute the question which he mentions, with a degree of horror, as found in the Theological Magazine, to Hopkins, or to any American divine. But if he could, what harm is there in asking the question? He has not told us. Had he looked into the next number of that Magazine, he would have seen the question answered, and might have informed the public whether it be answered right or wrong. My system has been more generally read and approved in America than was expected; and but little public opposition has been made to it.

You have my hearty wishes and prayers, dear sir, that you may be greatly blessed and useful in the important station in which you are placed, and be enabled to maintain and propagate the truths of Christianity, in the midst of the opposition with which you may be surrounded.

I shall be gratified by your writing me, whenever your more important business shall permit.

I am, with much esteem and cordial affection, your much obliged friend and servant,

S. HOPKINS.

Rev. Dr. Ryland.

LETTER TO DR. RYLAND,

Of Northampton, England, in Reply to Dr. Ryland's Theological Queries, and sent Seventeen Days before Dr. Hopkins's Death.

Newport, September, 1803.

Dear Sir: Last May I received yours of February 21st., with a MS. copy of Mr. Marsham's journal, and a number of valuable pamphlets, for which I am much obliged to you; particularly for plainly stating some difficulties and objections in your mind respecting several doctrines advanced on this side the water.

When your letter came to hand, I was not able to write or read, being brought very low by sickness, from which I did not recover for a considerable time. In the mean time, I received a letter from Mr. Fuller in answer to my objections which you sent to him, as made by me, to a position of his in his Bedford sermon, in my letter to you; to which I have replied, and enclose it to you unsealed; which, when you have read, you will please to seal and send to him.

You object to what I and my brethren in America hold with respect to the operation of the law on the renewed mind and the exercises respecting it, antecedent to a particular attention to the gospel, and understanding and embracing it; at least, of hoping to be saved by it, since they, antecedent to regeneration, and when regenerated, have had as much opportunity to think of and understand the gospel as the law. What of our writings you refer to, I cannot say, so cannot undertake a particular vindication of any of them, but take leave to make the following observations on the subject: —

The law of God must be understood, and approved or loved as perfectly right, good, and excellent, *before* the gospel can be embraced, liked, or even understood. There must be such an operation of the law on the renewed mind as to slay the person, or cause him, in some sense, to die the death which it denounces, before he can have any sensible relief from the gospel, or understand it. And how long the regenerate person shall continue in this hopeless state, under the operation of the law, till it shall have done its proper and necessary work, and before the gospel is particularly attended to and embraced, none can tell. In some, the whole may take place in a minute, or less, so that the person may not make any distinction, or perceive which is first or last; but, if really connected, the operation of law must be first, whether perceived or not, and that connection may be more evident and satisfactory when the work of the law appears to be most sensible, and distinct, and thorough. And, that it may be so, the renewed person may be held some time — an hour, a day, or longer — in attention to his state, according to law, and his mind be so intent upon the glory of God, and his law, as to admit of no particular view or thought of the gospel. And this may be wisely and kindly ordered by God, and the renewed mind be holden from attending to the gospel, till the law has effectually, and in the best manner, wrought death in him. And God, who has the total and most perfect government of the mind, and of every thought, orders the length of time the renewed mind shall continue wholly attentive to this glorious law, and what it implies, without particular attention

to the gospel, neither believing nor disbeliving it, and the succession of ideas and impressions on the mind, according to the particular disposition or circumstances of the person, and so as to answer the wisest and best ends.

The mind of man is not omniscient, and cannot attend to all things at one and the same time, or to two different and opposite objects with equal clearness, and be as much impressed by the one as by the other, at the same instant; it is under the direction and control of God. And as the nature and character of God, his law, and sin, or a person's own character in the light of these, must be *first* understood, and the mind must be thoroughly impressed with them, and consent to them as true, right, and important to be known, *before*, and in order to the gospel being understood and approved, the ideas and knowledge of the former must first be entertained by, and impressed on, the renewed mind, so as to bring it to a hearty submission, approbation, and compliance with them, *before* the latter can be received or understood. And as to the length of time and degree of this impression and work of the law upon the mind, before the gospel comes into view, it is wholly determined by God, so as to answer the best ends, and with a difference and variety on different minds, and in various circumstances, by us utterly indescribable.

That such a work of the law as has been described, or something of the same nature, must take place in the renewed mind antecedent to understanding and embracing the gospel, not only appears necessary from the reason and nature of things, but is evident and certain from divine revelation. The apostle Paul gives a particular account of the operation of the law on his mind antecedent to his receiving relief by the gospel. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." The law did not come to him until his mind was renewed; for it could not have the operation here described on an unrenewed, impenitent heart. He goes on to describe his case and his feelings. The law cursed all who were not, and had not been always, perfectly holy; he therefore, being carnal, or sinful, was sold under sin, unto death, the curse of the law. He consented to the law, that it was good, and delighted in it, after the inward man, and wished to obey it; but the evil inclination which was in him was leading him captive unto sin and death. In all this, Christ and the gospel are kept out of sight. He therefore cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" After this, Jesus Christ is introduced as affording complete relief. All previous to this

may take place in the renewed mind, before there is any particular discovery of Christ and the gospel, though much of it may be understood as expressing the character and exercises of a believer all his days. As the eyes of the two disciples going to Emmaus were for wise reasons holden, that they should not know Jesus when he joined them on the road, so for wise and more important reasons it may be ordered that the mind of the renewed sinner shall be so attentive to the law, and his case and circumstances, as being under the curse of it, and the eyes of his mind holden so as not to attend to, or think of, the gospel for a time, just so long as God pleases, to answer the best ends — one of which may be more effectually to subdue and mortify the selfishness of the heart in a view and approbation of the holy, just, good, and glorious law of God which condemns him to eternal death, and to form his heart to that disinterested benevolence, in the exercise of which alone he will be prepared to understand the glory of the gospel, and cordially embrace it.

And here it may not be improper to inquire, whether submitting to the death, or dying the death, which the law pronounces, and which is contained in the curse of it, so as to consent, and delight in it as holy, just, and good, does not imply a willingness to suffer the curse of it, rather than to have God and his law dishonored by his escape from this punishment. Be this as it may, we learn with certainty from this passage that, first, Paul was converted by the law first coming to his renewed mind, prepared to receive it, by which his sin revived, and he found himself dead according to the sentence of the law, *before* he found relief by the gospel. And that the law must thus *first* come, before the grace of the gospel can give true relief, seems to be asserted when it is said, "The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Mosaic dispensation was designed to exhibit the law. This was foremost and most visible, and the grace of the gospel was revealed in a more dark and hidden manner, under types and shadows. The ten commandments were revealed in the form of law, and contained the whole of it. And the curses of this law all Israel were ordered to cause to be read before them as soon as they got into the land of Canaan, and to pronounce and declare their hearty consent to them. They were ordered to say, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of the law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen." This was done before any blessing was brought into view, or mentioned; by which the whole congregation of Israel declared their hearty consent to the curse of the law, while it cursed them all, as they were all sinners.

As to the question, whether men ought or can be willing to be damned, if this be necessary for the glory of God and the greatest general good, I refer you to my letter to Mr. Fuller on that subject, and to a MS. Dialogue between a Calvinist and an anti-Calvinist, which I propose to get transcribed and send to you with this; in which you will see a solution of the following words in your letter: "It seems strange that a man should, from *love to God*, be willing forever to *hate* God, and blaspheme him."

Before this point is dismissed, I shall make some remarks on your following words: "What call have they to be willing to be damned, when God assures them that Christ is able and willing to save them, and can be glorified more in their salvation than in their damnation?" God does not assure any one of this but them who are sure that they do embrace the gospel, and are true Christians. They who are not assured of this cannot know that Christ is willing to save them, or that he can be more glorified in their salvation than in their damnation; and of the latter you appear to be speaking, by what goes before. If such can be sure of all this, they must be equally sure that all mankind will be saved; for Christ will in every instance do that which is more for his glory than the contrary; and we are most sure that he will save every one whose salvation will be more for his glory than his damnation. I know you are opposed to the doctrine of universal salvation; perhaps I misunderstood your words, and they may be taken in another sense.

I come now to that which is to you the most puzzling point — the divine agency in respect to sin. You think we spend too much time, and take more pains, in explaining and vindicating the divine agency in the existence of moral evil than in proving that God is the Author of all moral good. Perhaps this is not strictly true. I appeal to my system, where, perhaps, I have said as much on this point as any writer, in the chapter on the Divine Decrees, yet not exclusive of any other important doctrine. It is of importance that the divine character should be vindicated in the existence of sin under his government, as well as in other events. And is it not proved to every candid mind that the divine will and agency is as necessary for the existence of moral evil as of any other event, and that it is abundantly asserted in Scripture; and that they who attempt to account for the existence of sin in any other way will find it is attended with as many difficulties and great absurdities? — that the divine character may be vindicated, and his holiness and infinite benevolence or goodness is not sullied in the least, but gloriously manifested and displayed,

and sin as criminal, and the sinner as blamable, as if God had no will or agency respecting the existence of it? You say, the evil consequence which men will draw from this doctrine, to their own hurt, will be fixed on their minds so as not to be removed by any thing we can say; therefore it were better not to mention it. May not this be as truly said of many, if not all the most important doctrines of divine revelation? and the mouths of objectors cannot be stopped. The same consequences which you have mentioned, and worse, have been, and now are, drawn by millions from the doctrine of predestination, of the decrees of God, particular election, etc.; yet you believe and preach up, and labor abundantly to explain and vindicate them, let who will violently oppose and abuse them by drawing the worst and most destructive and blasphemous consequences from them.

You want to know how we would obviate the consequences which the Hindoos in India infer from this doctrine, that God is the Author of all sin. We answer, we do not know the particulars of their doctrine, and that it is the same with ours, but presume it is quite different and absurd. But if it be the same which we hold, we have already shown, and abundantly proved, that the inferences which they or any one else make are wholly groundless and unreasonable. Witness President Edwards on Freedom of Will, Dr. West on Moral Agency, and the chapter on the Divine Decrees, before mentioned.

But you wish us to make the matter so clear as to be easily understood by the most unenlightened mind, and made obvious to every Sooder and Hindoo in India. You have set us a hard task indeed, but we take leave to set you another, which when you have performed, we promise to do ours. The inferences from the doctrine of the decrees of God, and many other doctrines which you hold and preach, which have been and are now made by the millions of British Hindoos and Sooders, from the highest lords, bishops, doctors of divinity, and the clergy, down to the lowest and most ignorant peasant, are wrong and absurd, and the inferences you make from these doctrines are right, and agreeable to Scripture. Now, if you will make the matter so clear and plain as to be easily understood, not only by the learned, judicious, and attentive, but the most unenlightened mind, and to become obvious and plain to the lowest and most stupid and ignorant person in Britain, *then* we shall think it an easy matter to perform what you request.

I can give no information concerning the MSS. of President Edwards, which were in the hands of Dr. Edwards when he died. I had not seen him for a number of years before his

death, and fear they have fallen into hands who will let them sink into oblivion.

I have just entered on the eighty-third year of my age, and do not expect to preach or live much longer. Wish you may live many years, and do much good in the cause of Christ. Hope after that to meet you where Christ will abundantly reward his faithful servants.

I remain your assured friend and fellow-servant in the gospel,

S. HOPKINS.

Rev. Dr. Ryland.

P. S. December 3. — Since the above was written, Dr. Hopkins has been very sick, so as life was despaired of; is now recovering, but unable to write or to read a word. He has had the above transcribed, and desires me to add, that he wishes the Rev. Dr. Ryland, Rev. Mr. Fuller, and Sutclif would consult together, and write and send the result. And, if they have no objection, perhaps the correspondence may be printed. Dr. Hopkins recommends Dr. Hart, of Preston, and Dr. Strong, of Hartford, as correspondents with whom you will be pleased.

With very great respect, I am, reverend sir,

Your friend and servant,

ELIZABETH HOPKINS.

Rev. Dr. Ryland.

SAVING FAITH.

[The following is one of the letters referred to in the Memoir, p. 222, etc., which were addressed by Dr. Hopkins to one of his English friends. It is one of the many proofs that Hopkins did a great work in enlightening the minds of men on the subject of saving faith.]

Rev. and dear Sir: I have lately been reading Hervey's Dialogues and Letters, which I some time ago heard you speak favorably of. I have been entertained and well pleased with the performance. The doctrines of man's depravity, and the sinner's justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, are, I think, set in a strong and convincing light. The ingenious author has a peculiar talent at expressing his sentiments in elegant and charming language, suited — so far as I can judge — to the taste of this polite age; and the lively and entertaining descriptions of nature interspersed will, I hope,

draw on many to read, who otherwise never might have taken the pains to inquire into these important articles of the Christian faith; and it is a pleasing circumstance to me that a clergyman of the church of England should be willing and able so well to defend those doctrines, which, though fully and clearly expressed in the articles of that church, and solemnly subscribed by all its clergy, are rejected by almost all the clergy and laity of that communion in this land, and if not disowned, yet neglected by the writers of that denomination at home. And, indeed, for some reason or other, these doctrines, zealously professed in former ages, and the truth of them sealed by the blood of thousands, have, at this day, but very few able advocates publicly to espouse their cause, while their adversaries are triumphing as having demonstrated them to be most absurd and blasphemous.

Is it not a pity that Mr. Hervey so peremptorily declines this noble and important combat for the future? When strength and skill are so much wanted, is it not to be lamented that so able a combatant should leave the field? Where shall we find a man to supply his place? Must we not hope and pray that, if Mr. Hervey's resolution has been too sudden, the great Head of the Church will lead him as resolutely to reverse it? And as his declining state of health is mentioned as the principal reason for his withdrawing his pen from the further public defence of these precious and important doctrines, you will, I trust, join with me in praying for his restoration to health, and the lengthening out of his precious life. And I have at present something further to wish to pray for; even that, wherein Mr. Hervey and your friend are not of the same mind, God would reveal even this unto us. (Phil. iii. 15.) For I am not so happy as to agree with him in every article; yea, I must beg leave, till I can have further light, to dissent from him in a very important one. I cannot approve of his definition of faith, and of much that he says in illustrating and proving it to be proper and genuine. If I had opportunity of representing the difficulties in my mind against that particular, to the author, who appears to be possessed of such an uncommon state of sagacity, meekness, candor, and love of the truth, I should hope to give or receive that light which might be satisfactory. But as this privilege is denied to an obscure American, I have presumed to reply to you, reverend sir, and with leave to represent my difficulties and offer my objections to *you*, desiring, that if you find that I misunderstand this ingenious and justly-esteemed author, or that my objections have no weight, you would be so good as to show me wherein my mistake lies.

Mr. Hervey's definition of faith you will find in his third volume, Letter 10, p. 217, and it is repeated in Dialogue 16, and is as follows: "Faith is a real persuasion that the blessed Jesus has shed his blood for me, and fulfilled all righteousness in my stead; that, through this great atonement and meritorious obedience, he has purchased, even for my sinful soul, reconciliation with God, sanctifying grace, and every spiritual blessing."

I have the following objections in my mind against this definition of faith: —

I. I do not see what ground or foundation there is for such a faith in divine revelation. I do not find it any where revealed in the Bible that *Christ died for me*, etc. I find no such declaration or proposition there; and, therefore, I do not see what ground I have to believe this proposition from any thing revealed in the Bible. The gospel declares that Christ died to save sinners; that all that accept of him and rely upon him for salvation are interested in all the benefits of his death. This, therefore, I have reason to believe; but how shall I believe that I have an interest in his death, that my sins are pardoned, etc., unless I am conscious that I comply with the condition on which all this is offered and promised in the gospel? The invitations and promises of the gospel are a sufficient ground for my believing that Christ is an all-sufficient Savior; that he, with all his benefits, is freely offered to every sinner that will accept of him and trust in him; that, therefore, I am invited to come to him, and trust in him for salvation; that the invitation is made to me, and the promises are all mine, if I do comply with the invitation. But if I do not, none of the promises belong to me, and I have no interest in the saving benefits of Christ. Therefore, while I do not accept of, or comply with, the invitation, I have no ground to believe that any of the promises and benefits of the gospel are mine, or belong to me; but on the contrary, I have reason to believe and be assured that eternal life does not belong to me, but that I am pointed out as one on whom the wrath of God abideth. I can, therefore, have no further reason to believe that Christ died for me, that my sins are pardoned, etc., than I have evidence that I am willing to receive these blessings as they are offered; for it is by my thus receiving them that they become mine. If, therefore, I believe they are mine, *unconditionally*, my faith (if it can be called such) is wholly without any foundation from divine revelation; yea, is contrary to the express declaration of Scripture, and must be, therefore, a mere delusion.

This objection is made by *Theron*, p. 279; but I conceive it

is by no means taken off by what *Aspasio* says in answer to it, viz., that, though salvation by Christ is not promised to any one of us, and made ours by name, yet our character being pointed out, and it being declared that Christ came to save such, we have as much warrant to believe this salvation *ours* as if we were named.

If it was declared in the gospel *that Christ came into the world to save sinners*, so as all of this character are actually in a state of salvation, are actually pardoned, etc., then nothing further would be wanting but knowing that this character belongs to us, in order to our having sufficient ground of believing and being assured that Christ died for us, etc. Then sinners, wherever the gospel comes, might be assured that they were in a state of salvation, and might be called upon to believe that they were so. But then, by the way, this could not be called justifying, saving faith, because it is supposed that they are justified and in a state of salvation previous to their believing themselves to be so, otherwise they would have no reason to believe so. But this will be considered by and by. If it should be said that they are not in a state of salvation previous to their believing they are so, but Christ becomes their Savior by their believing that he is so, I think this is as much as to say that Christ becomes our Savior by our believing a falsehood; for whatever is necessary in order to Christ's being *my* Savior, must first take place before he can be so; and his being *my* Savior depends upon and comes in as a consequence of that, and follows it in order of nature and time. Therefore, according to this supposition, he is not mine until I have believed he is so, but he becomes mine in consequence of, and so after my believing he is mine already; which proposition is, by the supposition, false.

For example, if a rich man had, upon his decease, willed a hundred pounds to each poor man in a parish, so that every one of them that believed himself to have a title to it should actually share in the legacy, while those that did not believe it to be theirs should never have any share in it, or be the better for it, in this case, in order to have a title to this legacy, each poor man must believe a proposition to be true which is not true, that, by his believing it while it is false, it may be afterwards true. This, absurd and contradictory in all cases, is, "*Crede quod habes, et habes.*" Whatever is offered on such a condition, is offered on an impossible one; I mean a condition which cannot possibly be complied with, unless a person is under such a delusion as to believe that to be true which is absolutely false, and is supposed to be so in the proposal. It hence follows, that, if any thing whatsoever is offered upon

such a condition, though a person may be so deceived as to comply with it, and really believe it belongs to him before it does, yet the belief cannot be attended with any degree of assurance, unless a man can be assured that a proposition is true at the same time that it is not so. (See III.) But this I suppose none will believe to be the case; for then every sinner would, no doubt, be saved. Christ came into the world to save sinners; to sinners this salvation is brought and offered, and every sinner is promised a share in it, if he will accept of it as it is offered. But this surely gives the sinner no title to, no share in it, until he accepts of it. Therefore he cannot truly say, "This salvation is mine," until he has heartily accepted of it, or is willing to have it on the terms on which it is offered; and has no further ground to believe it belongs to him than he has evidence that he heartily accepts of it. By finding myself to be a sinner, I may be assured that salvation by Christ is freely offered to me; that I am invited to come to Christ, to take it and live forever. But as many sinners to whom this salvation is offered have no share in it, and never will have, I can from hence have no ground to believe that it belongs to me. I must first have evidence that I accept of it, before I can have any ground to believe that I have any interest in it. I think, therefore, *Theron's* objection stands good yet, and shows that the preceding similitude is not to *Aspasio's* purpose. I find nothing in the Bible that gives sinners in general any assurance or any reason to believe that their sins are forgiven; and, therefore, no sinner has any reason to believe this privilege belongs to him, unless he finds something peculiar in his own character by which he is distinguished from sinners in general, and to which the promise of forgiveness of sin is made; which, surely, is nothing less than a willingness to receive this at the hands of Christ as it is offered. And if this is really his character, salvation belongs to him, and his sins are pardoned, whether he *believes* this to be his happy case or not. Hence I conclude that such a persuasion cannot be saving faith, as it cannot be built upon any divine promise or declaration.

Perhaps it will be said that a willingness to receive offered mercy, or a hearty acceptance of it, as it is offered, is implied in a person's believing or being persuaded that Christ died for him, that his sins are forgiven, etc.

II. It seems to me that this definition of saving faith implies a contradiction, or supposes that, in order to a person's being entitled to salvation, he must believe or be persuaded of the truth of a proposition which at the same time is supposed to be false. Saving faith, I suppose all will grant, is that by which

men are entitled to salvation. By this, sinners pass from death to life, and are entitled to all the blessings of the covenant of grace. The sinner has no interest in Christ's righteousness before he believes. *With the heart he believeth unto righteousness.* (Rom. x. 10.) Now, if this faith is a persuasion that Christ died *for me*, that thereby reconciliation with God is granted *for my sinful soul*, etc., I think it must be a *real persuasion* of the truth of a proposition which at the same time is supposed to be, and really must be, absolutely false.

III. If the former objections were not in the way of my approving of this definition of faith, there is yet another difficulty in my mind.

I think, according to this definition, faith is not a holy act or exercise, nor does it imply any holy or virtuous exercise of heart at all. Neither can I see that holiness is the necessary or natural attendant or consequence of such a faith.

I do not see that the persuasion of the truth of this proposition, that Jesus Christ died for me, etc., implies any gracious or holy exercise of heart. The most unholy man may give as strong an assent to, and be as confident of, the truth of this proposition, as if he was never so holy. There is, I think, nothing in this proposition contrary to the taste and inclination of an unholy heart; and the firm belief of it appears to me no more difficult to a man wholly under the power of sin, than to the most holy man. It was equally true concerning both. Matter of fact, I think, renders this indisputable. What multitudes of evidently unholy persons in the Christian world, who are confident beyond all doubt that Christ is their Savior! Such a persuasion is alike common to the holy and unholy.

Now it appears to me unreasonable to suppose that that should be made a condition on which all the benefits of the covenant of grace are suspended, and should give a title to eternal life, which is neither in itself a holy exercise, nor implies any thing truly virtuous or holy. It would hence follow, I think, that justifying, saving faith is no more out of the reach of a person wholly under the power of sin, or no more above his present moral power, than any act of sin whatsoever, which is contrary to what Mr. Hervey supposes, and contrary to many express declarations of Scripture. Moreover, if this is true of saving faith, I do not see how it can be said to be a *principle of holiness*, or to *purify the heart;* (Acts xv. 9;) to be necessarily attended with or evidenced by good works, which is abundantly asserted in Scripture, and much insisted on by Mr. Hervey. I do not remember that he any where says that saving faith is itself a holy act or exercise. He says, indeed, pp. 171, 172, "Wherever He (the Almighty) works this true faith, He

plants the seed of *universal* holiness, and provides for the propagation of *every* virtue. This PERSUASION OF THE DIVINE GOOD WILL overcomes our natural reluctance, and excites a present desire to please our most merciful FATHER. This experience of the abundant grace of Christ attracts and assimilates the soul, turning it into an amiable likeness, as the wax is turned to the imprinted seal." In these words, he asserts that the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit do accompany faith, and that this persuasion effectually turns the heart from sin to God, but not that the persuasion or belief itself is a holy act. Neither does he, I think, prove that this faith is never found where the seed of universal holiness is not implanted, and that this persuasion effectually overcomes the native opposition of heart to holiness; and I am not yet convinced that this is in fact the case. I believe that such a persuasion of God's good will often is found with those who have not the seed of true holiness in their hearts; and that, in many instances, it does not excite the least sincere desire to please God, proves the occasion of making persons easy in sin, and strengthening and confirming them in disobedience. For confirmation of this, I again appeal to matter of fact. Mr. Hervey says a great deal to show what influence *his faith*, or a persuasion of the divine good will, will certainly have effectually to produce a holy life. But, after all, I am not convinced that this *persuasion* does not, in many instances, harden and embolden men in sin. The faith of Abraham and of St. Paul produced a holy obedience; but perhaps their faith was not the same with that defined by Mr. Hervey.

If I were to prove that the doctrine of justification by faith only was not a licentious doctrine, but that believers always lived a holy life, and that this was implied in this doctrine, I would endeavor to show that justifying faith is itself a holy act or exercise; that it implies and springs from that in the heart which, being confirmed, is the principal spring or seed of universal holiness; that, therefore, a holy temper or bent of mind, or a disposition and love to all branches of holiness and obedience, was always strong and prevalent in proportion to the strength of the exercise of faith. But in order to prove this, I imagine my definition of faith must not be the same with that I am objecting against.

IV. If this be justifying faith, I see no way to distinguish it from that faith or persuasion of the same thing which is not saving faith. None will deny, I suppose, that a person may believe or be strongly persuaded that his sins are forgiven, etc., when this is not the case. (Though I suspect that they who give that definition of faith that I am objecting against do, by

granting this, contradict themselves.) Mr. Hervey supposes that this persuasion or assurance may be a delusion, (p. 312.) He there says, the love of our brethren "may very justly be admitted as an evidence that our faith is real and our assurance no delusion." Now, I say, I see not how the delusive persuasion shall be distinguished from that which is saving, inasmuch as this definition includes a false, delusive faith, as well as a saving faith. If it be said that there is this difference, viz., a delusive persuasion or assurance is not accompanied with, and does not produce, good works, whereas a *saving* faith is never without good works, this will not at all remove my difficulty; for upon this supposition, the false, delusive faith is as much included in the definition of saving faith as saving faith itself. Therefore it is not a definition of saving faith, as it is not hereby distinguished from faith that is not saving, and is as much a definition of that as of saving faith.

Further, when it is said that saving faith is accompanied with good works, but that which is not saving is without works, this does not seem to point out any *intrinsic* difference between these two sorts of faith; but they seem to be supposed to be alike in all other respects but this, viz., that one is without works, being alone; the other is accompanied with good works. If it be said, that the one being accompanied with good works as its genuine attendant and fruit, and the other not, implies and points out an intrinsic difference between these two sorts of faith, I would observe that this is, at most, only to assert that there is an intrinsic difference, which is the occasion or cause of a different production or effect, but does by no means point out this intrinsic difference, and show wherein it consists. I am not yet informed what there is in saving faith which is the proper spring or cause of good works, by which it is in itself essentially different from a false faith. Now, I think no definition of saving faith is just and good, but that which expresses the essential difference between that and every kind of faith that is not saving; inasmuch as it is no more a definition of saving faith than of faith that is not saving.

V. Experience and observation have served to strengthen me in my objections against this definition of saving faith, as it has convinced me of the bad tendency of such a notion of faith, and the sad consequence, in many instances, of persons depending upon such *a persuasion* or *assurance by the direct act of faith*, as Mr. Hervey calls it.

You are, no doubt, sensible, sir, that many of those who passed for converted, and thought themselves so, in the time of the outpouring of the Spirit of God on New England some years ago, have so behaved since as to give good reason to

conclude that their faith is not saving; and, if my observation is right, those persons whose first and direct act of faith was a persuasion or assurance that Christ died for them, loved them, etc., are most generally the persons whose faith proves vain, being alone.

Most of our enthusiasts, and those that have brought reproach on the work of God, are, I think, of this stamp. They are confidently persuaded and assured that Christ died for them, and their first faith was grounded upon some revelation made to them (which I think they never had from God's word) that Christ loved them, and their sins were forgiven, or the like. This persuasion (which they were more probably led into by the devil than the Holy Spirit of God, as it is a persuasion of that which I think cannot be true) is like to be the ruin of thousands; whereas those who show most of a Christian temper, and behave most to the honor of Christ and his religion, being inquired of, will tell you that they had such a view of the all-sufficiency of Christ, and his readiness to save sinners that come to him, and they had such a sense of his excellency and beauty, and the suitableness and glory of the way of salvation by him, that they could not but admire Christ and place an unreserved trust in him; that in this way their hearts were quieted, and they enjoyed inward peace and satisfaction; while they came to no persuasion that Christ and his salvation were *theirs*, and had not the least thought at the time about this, that they are conscious of, though perhaps it was not long before they began to entertain a hope that they had believed on Christ, and so were interested in his salvation. For my part, when I have such an account of a person of his conversion, I have a more comfortable persuasion that he is a true believer in Christ than I have of those who tell me that the first discovery they had of Christ was, that he was their Savior, that it was revealed to them that Christ died for them, that he loved them, and had loved them, etc.; from which they were persuaded and assured that they were in a state of salvation, and have great joy and transports in this way of believing. I say, I like the faith of the former better than the latter, and that not only for the reason given before, (which, I think, shows that the faith of the latter is certainly a delusion,) but because, from my acquaintance with persons and their souls' concerns, I find that those who have the latter generally discover a temper and go into a conduct very unbecoming the gospel, which, I think, is not so common with the former.

I would not be understood to suppose that a persuasion that Christ is their Savior does in no instance attend the first

act of faith, (though I do not think this is generally the case.) No doubt that a person's *first* hearty acceptance of Christ and reliance upon him for salvation may be attended with a consciousness, a persuasion, yea, an assurance that he does now accept of him and trust in him, and, consequently, he is assured that Christ is *his* Savior. But then I should not call this persuasion any part of his saving faith. And when this is not the case, this persuasion or belief generally takes place not long after the soul's having closed with Christ, and in many instances, no doubt, answers to what may properly be called an assurance.

I have carefully considered all the texts of Scripture which Mr. Hervey alleges in justification of his definition of faith; and they appear to me either only to show that the blessings of the gospel are offered freely to those that will accept of them, or to prove that a persuasion or assurance of their title to them is attainable by good men; except Heb. xi. 1, p. 285, which I think not at all to his purpose, unless it was first proved that it is revealed in the Bible that the sinner has a title to gospel blessings previous to his faith. If this was the case, Mr. Hervey's faith might realize to the sinner's mind what was in divine revelation a real, substantial truth; but if no such thing is revealed in the Bible, but the contrary, (which I am yet persuaded is the truth,) no true faith can make this real. Things must have a substance, and be realities, in order to their being realized to the mind by faith. This notion of faith was embraced by many of the reformers, I am sensible, and by some eminent godly men since; but as they *might* err, and no doubt *did so* in many instances, their authority affords no matter of conviction. I have no evidence that this notion of theirs about faith did in any degree promote their usefulness.

These, reverend sir, are my most material objections against Mr. Hervey's definition of faith. But it may be that I misunderstood Mr. Hervey's definition, and I would be the less confident I do not, because in some passages he seems to set this point in a different light, (p. 239, middle.) He says, "Nothing is required in order to our participation of Christ and his benefits but a conviction of *our* need, a sense of *their* worth, and *a willingness to receive them in the appointed way*." I take this to be saving faith, and I should think Mr. Hervey meant to describe saving faith here, as he speaks of this as the only condition or thing required in order to the sinner's partaking of Christ and his benefits; but I find nothing of a persuasion that Christ is our Savior, or that he shed his blood for us, in this passage, nor any thing that implies this. I suppose a person may be willing to receive Christ and his benefits in the

appointed way, and yet not be persuaded that Christ and his benefits are *his;* yea, that this persuasion is so far from being implied in this acceptance, that the former cannot take place but in consequence of the latter, as I have before endeavored to show.

Again, p. 247, he says, "His (the sinner's) part is to *accept* the blessings fully purchased by the Savior and freely offered to the sinner." On page 282, showing it is the sum of the gospel to be preached by Christ's ministers to all nations, he says they are to publish, "that all unhappy sinners . . . . may come to Christ, and rely on Christ; may, *in this manner*, obtain pardon, righteousness, and all the privileges of children." In each of these passages, I suppose Mr. Hervey means to speak of saving faith, and I can find no fault with his description, as I belive it to be perfectly scriptural; but that coming to Christ, and relying on Christ, implies a persuasion that my sins are pardoned, or that such a persuasion implies coming to Christ, or is any thing akin to it, I see not the least evidence.

I like Mr. Hervey's representation of the act by which Christ becomes our security, (pp. 300, 301.) And when I read that passage over, it seems to me to be in some measure inconsistent with what I have been objecting against. Speaking of Christ's being in Scripture represented by a place of refuge, etc., he says, "If this is a proper emblem of CHRIST, to what shall we liken *faith?* To a persuasion that the shelter of the summer-house is *free* for our use? That we are welcome to avail ourselves of the commodious retreat? Would this defend us from the inclemencies of the weather? Would this *bare persuasion*, unless reduced to practice, be any manner of shelter to our persons? No, surely. We must *actually fly* to the shelter, and we must actually apply to the SAVIOR; otherwise I see not what comfort or benefit can be derived from either.

Here Mr. Hervey professedly points out a *saving faith*, in distinction from, and opposition to, that which is not so, in which he appears to me as much to oppose what he elsewhere calls saving faith as any other faith whatsoever. May not his definition be put to the question in the same manner, and fall under the same condemnation? His faith is a *bare persuasion;* and will my being *persuaded* that Christ is my shelter be any security to me, unless I actually betake myself to him? Will my bare persuasion that Christ died for me render him of any service to me, unless I actually apply to him by a hearty acceptance of him, and trust in him?

Page 253. *Theron* is without any *persuasion* that he has any title to Christ's righteousness; yet, upon his professing to beg

and pray for this blessing, *Aspasio* assures him that he has a title to this blessing. So (pp. 254, 274, 275) *Aspasio* pronounces *Theron* entitled to the blessing of the gospel upon his *thirsting* for them, while *Theron* himself is wholly without any *persuasion* or even suspicion of his own interest in these blessings; hence I conclude that *Aspasio* either supposes that sinners may have a title to the righteousness of Christ upon a condition lower than *believing in him*, viz., their *living* and *thirsting* for this blessing, or he supposes a person may believe with a saving faith, and yet be without any *real persuasion* that this blessing belongs to him.

That *Aspasio* supposed the former, one would be apt to suspect, from *Theron's* being, after all this, spoken of as an unbeliever. (p. 276.) That he should suppose the latter, seems more agreeable to what is said, (p. 290,) where *Aspasio* allows *Palæmon's* faith to be *sound and genuine*, though it includes no persuasion of a title to gospel blessings; though, I confess, I see not how his granting this is consistent with his not giving up his own definition as not comprehending all *sound*, *genuine*, saving faith, but only pointing out a *merely generous and triumphant faith.*

These and some other passages may, perhaps, give no sufficient ground to suspect that I have in some measure misunderstood Mr. Hervey. However, I refer the whole matter to you, reverend sir; and if you find my objections are frivolous, or that they do not properly lie against Mr. Hervey's faith, please to show me my mistake, and add to the obligations by which I am your friend and servant, etc.

P. S. That great, learned, and accurate Dutch divine, Van Mastricht, whose body of divinity perhaps excels all others that have yet been written, and is, in my opinion, richly worth the repeated perusal of every one who would be a divine, argues against the notion of faith which I have been objecting to, in such a nervous and concise manner, that I presume to throw a short transcription from him into a postscript, notwithstanding I have, I fear, trespassed on your patience in my long letter.

"Queritur, 4. An applicatio seu persuasio peculiaris, qua quis certus est, Christum esse suum Mediatorem, sit ipsa essentia fidei salvificæ? This question he answers in the negative, and gives these reasons for it: —

"1st. Quia persuasio ista particularis, nullam in Scripturis habet, justificationis, aut salutis *promissionem.* Nullibi enim, vel *verbis* dicitur, vel *re;* quicunque fuerit persuasus, Christum esse *suum* Servatorem, *sibi* remissa esse peccata sua; ille justificatus est, aut justificabitur, etc.

"2d. Quia non potest obtinere, hujusmodi peculiaris *persuasio*, nisi, *præsupposito* actu fidei salvifico, ex quo inferas et colligas, Christum *tuum* esse Servatorem, *tibi* remissa esse peccata tua.

"3d. Quia *assensus* ille applicationis, si modo fides *divina* velit esse, verbum Dei dicentis, pro objecto requirit; ubi enim Deus non *loquitur;* ibi ego etiam non possum *credere;* jam autem, Deus nullibi dicit; tuus, Petre aut Paule, Christus est Servator, *pro te* mortuus est, *tibi* remissa sunt, tua peccata.

"4th. Quia hac ratione, vel Christus, pro reprobis etiam, erit mortuus; vel, credendum nonnullis fide divinâ, quod est falsum. Ratio est, quoniam omnes et singuli, quibus annunciatur Christus, inter quos, plurimi sunt reprobi, tenentur credere in Christum.

"5th. Quia persuasio illa particularis, saltem quoad essentiam actus, *irregenitis* et hypocritis inesse potest."*

* See lib. ii. cap. i., pp. 56, 57, § xxv.

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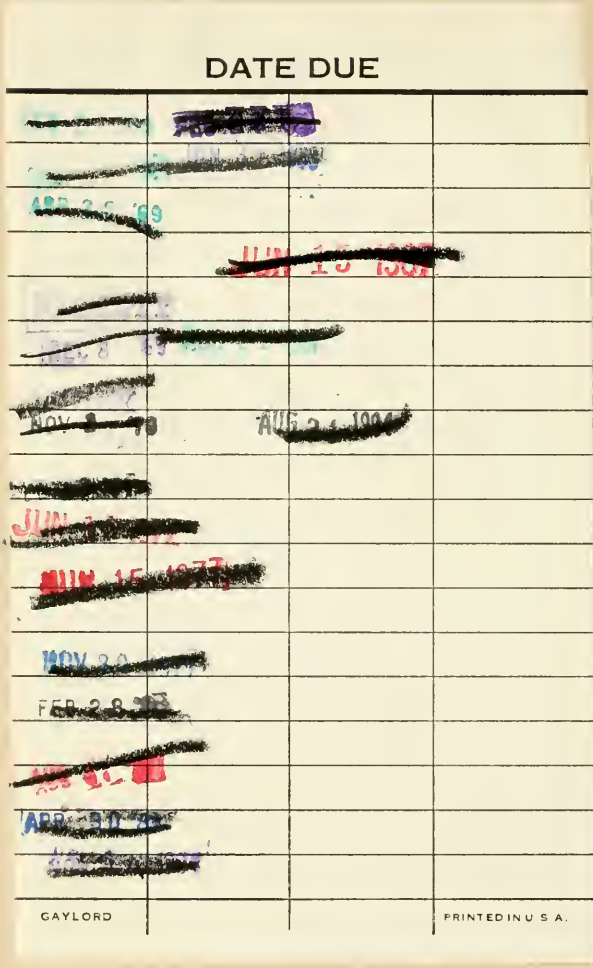

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